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The Nation

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NO PRESIDENT in recent years has received rougher treatment at the hands of Congress than was the fate of Herbert Hoover in the overriding of his veto of the Spanish War Veterans' pension bill calling for an additional expenditure of $11,712,000. To us the President's veto seems sound and just; he was not opposed to the principle of the bill but to the looseness of its drafting. He could rightly see, for instance, no reason why we should violate our historic policy of not awarding pensions for disabilities arising from vicious habits, or such causes as venereal disease, alcoholism, or drugs. No pension has been granted to a Civil War veteran of less than ninety days' service; this bill reduces the length of necessary service to seventy days. Mr. Hoover thinks, moreover, that the applicant should prove that he really needs the money. All this was a red flag to Congress. The Senate overrode the veto by 61 votes to 18, the House by 294 to 14. As he contemplates the latter figures, Mr. Hoover may well exclaim, "Et tu, Brute!" For while the Senate has frequently castigated him, this is the first time that the faithful House majority has broken away. This is the measure of the President's intense unpopularity both in and out of his party—an unpopularity evidenced also by the lack of any applause when he is heard and seen in the movie houses. It bodes ill for the rest of his term. The fault is his own, for until now he has been a leader who will not lead.

THE TARIFF BILL again hangs in the balance with a closer vote certain than had been anticipated, for some Senators are literally being deluged with protests. Competent observers even declare that if the bill could be held off three or four weeks longer it would never become law of the land. The mystery as to who wants it continues. Outside of some, relatively few, manufacturers, no one appears openly for it. Some persons are, it is true, begging that it be passed so that business may be put out of the misery of its uncertainty, with the expectation that business will then revive. Nothing could be farther from the fact. If this measure becomes a law the lot of every American citizen will be harder. He will be able to buy less because what he buys will cost him more. As for business itself, it needs export trade more than ever before and no deadlier blow could be struck at that than the passage and signing of this bill. We are well aware that Congress does not wish to see its labors of fourteen months go for nothing. It would, however, be far better for it to swallow its pride and kill the bill rather than to do such damage to American trade and prosperity. But the ignorance and stupidity in regard to economic law of the average Republican legislators are so great that they still have no conception that they are playing with fire. To all foreign complaints they retort: "What business is it of theirs?"

MEANWHILE, PROTESTS against the tariff have been piling up with unprecedented speed, and from sources which have never before spoken out in any such manner or with any such unanimity. Thus, all the leading automobile manufacturers, including Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., president of General Motors, are demanding the killing of the bill. The export managers of General Motors declare that they are "out at the front where they feel the full force of the bitter resentment stirred up in other countries by the proposal to raise the American tariff walls." Mr. Sloan believes the failure of the bill would serve notice "that the United States recognizes the important principle that it must buy if it is to sell." Experts in attendance at the National Foreign Trade Council held in Los Angeles at the end of May were outspoken against the measure, which they all believed would do great harm to American trade. Thus, Mr. T. M. Haight, secretary of the International General Electric Company, declares that the decrease in trade which will follow the tariff bill will go far to prevent the stabilization of American industry. Harvey S. Firestone, the great rubber manufacturer, is heretical enough to say that the bill "is a positive detriment to business generally and I hope that it will be defeated." The president of the Pillsbury Flour Corporation in Minneapolis and the head of the National Cash Register Company are both against the bill. France has acted again by increasing the import on wheat from sixty to eighty francs per one hundred kilograms gross. There is a strong movement in Belgium for the renunciation of its commercial treaty with the United States, containing a most-favored-nation clause. Paris reports that this proposal has been enthusiastically indorsed in other countries.

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THE SECRET CABLE MESSAGES, paraphrased after the usual roundabout manner of the Department of State, which have been turned over to Senator Borah under an injunction of secrecy are not likely to help very much, we suspect, in convincing either the Foreign Relations Committee or the Senate that the naval treaty ought to be ratified. The messages, it is intimated, go to show that Mr. Hoover and Mr. MacDonald were in complete accord after their talks at Rapidan. If they do, and if this accord was what it was represented to be at the time, these cables will set the treaty in rather dismal colors, for it is clear that the treaty accomplishes no important limitation of naval armaments, that there will actually be a great deal more naval tonnage in 1936 than there is now, and that instead of financial savings the United States alone stands to pay out a round billion dollars for the elusive thing known as parity. If the treaty is ratified, it will not be because it possesses the merits which the public had been led to expect, or because it makes war very much less likely, but because Mr. Hoover is determined to jam it through.

RAILROAD NET EARNINGS for April, based on the figures of the first seventy roads reporting, show a decrease of 33 per cent from April of last year, comparing with decreases of 28.2, 29.8, and 37.3 per cent for January, February, and March respectively. Gross revenue fell 12 per cent in April, against 12.5 per cent in March, and 10.1 per cent in February. Some comfort may be found in the fact that the progressive decline of the preceding three months appears to be stayed. During the first quarter both gross and net earnings were lower than in any year since 1922. The figures suggest the severity of the present business depression, a world-wide phenomenon which the Westminster Bank of London in its monthly letter characterizes as a major cyclical movement. The disagreeable truth is that we are in the trough of a depression, and it behooves us to prepare vigorously for another difficult winter. In this connection the Wagner unemployment bills have been passed by the Senate, and the House Committee on Labor has made a favorable report on the one providing for better employment statistics. The other two measures, providing for a prosperity-reserve fund against just such emergencies as this and for federal aid in extending employment agencies, slumber in the House Judiciary Committee, of which Congressman George S. Graham is chairman. How can the Administration leaders afford to let these bills die?

A UNANIMOUS DECISION by eight justices of the Supreme Court (Justice McReynolds not sitting), affirming the right of railroad employees to be represented in negotiations with their employer by their national trade union and not by a company union, may be commended to those discouraged souls who are inclined to despair of the court. One of the Southern Pacific subsidiaries refused to treat with its employees through their Brotherhood and insisted on negotiating through the company union, the Association of Clerical Employees—Southern Pacific Lines. The District Court granted an injunction against the company, which promptly violated it. Judge Hutcheson thereupon sentenced three officials to jail for contempt, and ordered the Association disestablished and the Brotherhood reinstated as the representative of the employees. This injunction was sustained by the Circuit Court of Appeals, and is now upheld by the Supreme Court in a sweeping opinion handed down by Chief Justice Hughes which overrules completely the contentions of the company. The case is one in which legal principles are by no means necessarily of controlling force, and it is a fair question whether a decision rendered six months ago would have been unanimously favorable to the contention of the unions. By the very nature of its work the court is in the highest sense a political body. Its members on the whole are wise men, and it would be strange indeed if the lesson of the Hughes-Parker rebellion had been wholly lost on them.

A BLACK MAN in Oklahoma was arrested on the highway two miles from Chickasha, Oklahoma, on the afternoon of Memorial Day, charged with assaulting a white woman who lived in a dugout a mile from town. He denied his guilt, but the woman identified him, according to the story, and he was put in jail. That evening a mob attacked the jail bent on a lynching party. At this point the story becomes a little obscure, except that "in the melee [according to the United Press] some one was able to slip unobserved to the cell where the Negro was clawing at the iron bars, and shot him"; except that during a lull in the man hunt, when the mob had "apparently dispersed," the wounded Negro, lying in his cell, was stabbed twice by one of a handful of "curious" persons who were allowed not only to loiter about the jail but to go to the second floor, where the Negro was kept. The "loiterer" turned out to be the husband of the woman in the dugout! The cell was apparently open, for "he paused over the unconscious Negro and suddenly thrust a knife into the Negro's chest." It should be added that the National Guard, charged with protecting life and property, was somewhere in the offing armed with machine-guns, that an attempt to burn the jail was unsuccessful—and that the Negro died the next day in a hospital in Oklahoma City fifty miles away. Five men, including the "loiterer" who stabbed the Negro, were arrested, but were released pending investigation. This is not a particularly forceful beginning for the "immediate and vigorous prosecution" which Governor Holloway says he will demand. Meanwhile, in Sherman, Texas, fourteen men who took part in the recent lynching there have been charged with arson, burglary, assault to murder, and inciting a riot, and have been transferred to Dallas for trial.

"A RIP-ROARING CYCLONE" is the description which a writer in the Portland, Oregon, *Telegram* gives of the irruption of George W. Joseph into the Oregon gubernatorial campaign. Mr. Joseph, who until a few days ago was a lawyer, attracted State-wide attention some time since by his vigorous but unsuccessful defense of the will of one E. Henry Wemme, half of whose fortune was to benefit a charitable trust in Portland. More recently he has launched some bold attacks against the Public Service Commission and the power companies, and has declared that the State courts, in certain cases which he named, have been influenced by political and financial interests. For this last he has just been permanently disbarred by order of the Supreme Court. Shortly before his disbarment, however, he carried off the Republican nomination for Governor at the primaries by about 5,000 votes, after making the fight

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on the issue of personal vindication, touring the State by airplane, and addressing record-breaking audiences. If he is elected, as seems certain, there may be doings in Oregon, for Mr. Joseph is a hard hitter, his following believes in him enthusiastically, and the courts have played into his hands.

THE AMERICAN WAY with Mexico has always been an alternation of kicks and courtesy, but the pending proposal to restrict Mexican immigration into the United States involves a discrimination more glaring than that which has been directed at the Chinese and Japanese. The Harris bill, which has passed the Senate and is now before the House, applies to Mexico, alone among the countries of the Western Hemisphere, the national-origins immigration quota, thereby cutting down the number of permitted entries to about 1,900 annually. Why the restriction was not extended to all the Americas was told by that sterling hundred-per-center, Representative Albert Johnson of Washington, in a speech in this city on May 16. The House, Mr. Johnson explained, wanted a blanket restriction, but a sweeping attack of that kind "creates consolidated opposition from too many minorities to be handled just at present," so the "alien-minded" and the "anti-nationalists" are to be circumnavigated by going at the dangerous countries one by one. Quite so; if you can't hand out injustice wholesale for fear of a drubbing, try dispensing it at retail. Mexican opinion, naturally, is up in arms. Thus is the good work of Ambassador Morrow being undone. Mr. Hoover ought to veto the Harris bill if it comes his way.

DOES IT PAY TO PRAY? Thus the esteemed *American Magazine,* in advertising a marvelous article on Dean Shailer Mathews, of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, and his "religious laboratory." The answer to the question evidently is, You bet! Witness the following: "Could a man make more money if now and then he prayed about his business?" asks the enterprising reporter. "I think so—if he is honest and serious," answers the dean. "Could he get a better job?" "I haven't much doubt of it." If further evidence is needed that, in the reporter's homely phrase, God is still on the job, or that, in the dean's more scholarly phrasing, He is not emeritus, listen to the religious leader's account of his forgetful colleague who was loaded down with three man-size jobs involving much detail: "'God,' he prayed in all earnestness, 'help me to remember everything instantaneously, the moment it is needed.' Within a week he was master of the jobs, and never thereafter forgot an engagement or an essential detail. Without desire so intense that it became prayer, he might have failed." We have always respected Shailer Mathews as a liberal and intelligent religious teacher; but if he and his colleagues in divinity are willing to assume responsibility for these and other statements attributed to him in this article, we can only say, may God help the state of religious instruction in these United States! It evidently ought to be transferred from the divinity school to the college of business administration.

STONE WALLS are all the more a prison when the prisoner listens in on the doings of the world outside. But in spite of painful memories and associations most of the 3,000 prisoners in the Illinois penitentiary at Joliet were thankful for the first radio program made possible by the recent innovation of a tiny radio set in each of the 1,000 cells. The program, which was selected by an official at a central receiving apparatus, was a varied one, including baseball scores, current news, humorous sketches, dance tunes, and a symphony. More than one man "cried out in despair," dispatches record, at the too vivid recollection of his own freedom; and, indeed, throughout the prison, the livelier the music, the more thoughtful the listeners. One white-haired prisoner, who has lived behind the walls for thirty-five years, was bewildered and terrified, like Rip Van Winkle, by this new world, and confessed that more than ever does he dread his approaching parole. One of our most urgent prison problems is the mitigation of this numbing spiritual isolation, and Major Henry C. Hill, warden of the Joliet penitentiary, deserves praise for his innovation.

SO THE HISTORIC *CENTURY MAGAZINE,* a quarterly for the past year, has been joined together with the revitalized *Forum.* May no man put them asunder! Under Henry Goddard Leach's editorship the *Forum* has shown a great deal of life and vigor, has lived up to its title in giving both sides of pending questions, and has displayed gratifying evidence of growth. We hope that the combination will bring so many readers to the *Forum* as to insure that its rebirth has been followed by a permanence not to be questioned. All our high-grade monthlies work on too narrow margins, whereas those of the type of the *Ladies' Home Journal* roll in wealth. Meanwhile, we shall not forget the *Century's* great achievements of the past under Richard Watson Gilder and Robert Underwood Johnson and their associates. George Kennan's tremendous exposure of Czarist Russia in the early eighties alone entitles it to immortality, while its extraordinary series "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War" is still source material of unsurpassed value. Amalgamations being the order of the day on both sides of the Atlantic, there comes the news from London of the merging of the *Daily News* and *Daily Chronicle,* both widely read Liberal dailies. It is hoped that their joint daily circulation will be no less than 2,000,000 copies. The *Daily News,* whose first editor was Charles Dickens, having already swallowed the *Westminster Gazette,* is now the dominating Liberal daily in England, with its financial control in the hands of L. J. Cadbury of the well-known family of Quaker chocolate manufacturers. Thus, one by one, disappear the journalistic giants of yesteryear.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH'S REVIEW, printed elsewhere, of his six years of service as the dramatic critic of *The Nation* does not mean that the editor has lived up to his agreement to do away with either Mr. Krutch or his services at the end of this period. As it happens, he goes to France for a year on a Guggenheim Fellowship, to devote himself to his forthcoming book, and will take up his work again in the fall of 1931. During his absence *The Nation,* we are happy to say, will be served by Heywood Broun—in person—as dramatic critic. Let the theater take notice that his humor, his sarcasm, his kindliness and good nature are all to be reckoned with! Today we should like to share with our readers our own belief that in all its history no one connected with *The Nation* has shown greater promise or more rapidly established himself as a critic of the drama, literature, and life than has Joseph Wood Krutch.

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Prohibition Flares Up

THAT the wets are plunging with renewed confidence into their fight to alter the Volstead law, or even to amend the Constitution and do away with prohibition, is obvious. The New York *World,* for example, is every day putting on the first page the latest wet recruits who were formerly drys. Thus, a city magistrate, Judge Jean Norris, Miss Katharine Bement Davis, former commissioner of correction in the metropolis, Adolph Lewisohn, the philanthropist, together with the head of a social settlement and various others, are heralded to fresh fame because they have abandoned the prohibition cause. At the same time the Baltimore *Sun* scans the heavens in vain for a wet who has gone dry, declaring that such an apostasy would be most important front-page news. And the Supreme Court of the United States has done a remarkable bit by declaring that the buyer of liquor does not violate the law although he knows when he buys it that it is contraband and is quite aware that the man who sells it to him is a criminal.

Then when the wet looks to Congress he sees that Senator Jones, author of the proposal to make violation of the prohibition laws a crime punishable by five years in prison and a fine up to $10,000, has declared that if his State, Washington, votes for modification or repeal he will abide by its decision. Senator Walsh of Montana, an equally ardent dry, has announced his willingness to have the voters of his State express their wishes through a referendum, and he declares: "Of course, I would stand by the vote in that referendum"—thus doing violence to his own conscience. But the wet's greatest thrill of late has been, of course, the speech of Dwight Morrow in New Jersey in which he came out for the old solution of States' rights with the proviso that the power of the federal government shall be invoked in some way to prevent wet States from inundating dry States with their liquor—a situation which in the days prior to prohibition did more than anything else to stimulate the drys to demand national abolition of liquor. It is interesting to note in this connection that so good a wet as Senator Bruce has declared that Dwight Morrow's solution will mean the return of the saloon in ten States and thirty-eight varieties of prohibition in others. The *Literary Digest* poll is also being used to the fullest extent, despite the fact that in the face of its Pennsylvania returns that State was so unkind as to nominate Gifford Pinchot for Governor on a dry ticket.

That these are portents we are free to say, and we welcome them as we welcome anything which will bring the issue to a head. We continue to believe that the present situation is intolerable and continue to urge as a first step a nation-wide referendum on the issue. If Senator Walsh is ready for such a test in his own State he ought to be ready for it in the nation. It would be admirable if he himself should take the lead in the next Congress in demanding a poll of the entire people with a ballot stating each issue clearly, succinctly, and unequivocally. Again, we welcome the appearance in the field of wet candidates running openly as such and seeking public approval. That is the next-best way to feel the public pulse and to test its desires. Anything which will give that thoroughly obnoxious person, the legislator who "votes dry and drinks wet," the courage to wear his true colors will be a great step forward. Let us see if prohibition can be made a major political issue in this country and, if so, how the bulk of the people stand upon it.

The great weakness of the wets remains their inability to offer any definite program. They are unanimous in demanding the repeal of the amendment or the Volstead Act, and they are profuse in asserting that they are not in favor of the return of the saloon. But when it comes to specific proposals they are utterly at sea, for most of them have nothing to suggest. The herd mumbles something about the Canadian or Swedish system and lets it go at that. Any real knowledge of what those systems connote they have not. It is amusing to see that some of the richest men who are backing the Du Pont repeal association and its $25,000-a-year secretary, Mr. Curran, are apparently quite willing to put the government into the liquor business, although their daily prayer is that the government be taken out of every bit of business that private citizens could carry on. If this association really wishes to aid the repeal campaign it could do nothing more valuable for its cause than to call a nation-wide convention to formulate a definite plan for the substitute for the saloon that the drys need to agree upon. With a definite, clear-cut, specific program to offer they could rally many to their standard who would not vote in a *Literary Digest* poll because they cannot see whither repeal leads.

The strongest influence against the drys remains the failure to enforce the law. Mr. Wickersham believes it could be enforced approximately as well as our other laws, but Mr. Hoover, so far as we can see, makes no especial effort to bring that about. Certainly he is issuing no passionate appeals to the country to help in its enforcement; he has allowed to pass unnoticed the statements that he is drifting toward repeal. In Philadelphia the enforcement unit, we are told by well-informed newspapermen, is preventing the sale of liquor in hotels and restaurants, and speakeasies. But no one, they assert, has the slightest difficulty in obtaining the names of entirely reliable bootleggers who will deliver anything desired on shortest notice, at house or office. It would seem as if the President might, without waiting for any more reports from Mr. Wickersham's commission, make up his own mind as to whether the law can or cannot be enforced and let the country have the benefit of the decision.

Meanwhile the argument goes on. We are not of those who believe that the issue will speedily be the dominating one in our public life or that the wets are going to have it all their own way. The wet split in New Jersey probably means the defeat of Dwight Morrow in the primary, and the country will lose the services in the Senate of one who really shows some desire to lead and the courage to take a position, even if that position is no more practical than most of those taken by either side. We are aware, too, that many Americans are heartily sick of the whole business. None the less it seems to us that this is likely to be the country's hair shirt for a long while to come.

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Ramsay MacDonald and India

NEVER has there been a clearer illustration of the taming effect of office-holding upon liberals and radicals than that afforded by the MacDonald Government in England on the question of India. Until a couple of years ago the Laborites were in arms against the Indian policy of the Conservatives. Now they are in office and the Nationalist uprising has been testing them as by fire. Although forewarned five months before they took office in June last by the announcement of the All India National Congress that there would be a demand for independence if dominion status were not granted by December 31, 1929, the Labor leaders took no steps toward a radical solution of the problem. In consequence they have the revolution to deal with and their fate in large measure is in the hands of Gandhi and his followers. By that we do not mean the mere question of their retention of office. It is their moral standing before the bar of international judgment which is at stake. Have they or have they not the moral courage to meet the situation in all its most difficult and trying aspects?

We must confess to doubt and discouragement when we read the cabled reports of the May 25 speech of Wedgwood Benn, Secretary of State for India. It is adequately characterized by a London correspondent of the New York *Times:*

> As a matter of fact, the speech of the Secretary of State for India, Wedgwood Benn, differed but little, and that little was in theory, from any statement which might have been made by a Conservative statesman. India needed England and England needed India, he said, and if the newspapers chose to exaggerate the recent troubles that constituted no reason why London should not proceed with the plans for the coming Indian conference. That Mahatma Gandhi and some others had been put in jail, it was explained, was not to punish them for their political views, but simply to place them where they could not disturb the good order existing in most parts of India among most of the 300,000,000 population.
>
> In so far as Mr. Benn's Second Internationalist theories may have clashed with the interests of the British Empire, the British Empire won.

Precisely. The result was that the left wing of the Labor forces was "disgusted," but the speech "satisfied a large majority of the House of Commons."

It should not satisfy Ramsay MacDonald. For that Prime Minister is on record not once but several times. For example, as late as October 17, 1927, Mr. MacDonald wrote in the London *Daily Herald* that further tutelage of India for self-rule was useless, and that India should receive independence at once:

> The moral justification that has always been made for the existence of our Empire among subject peoples has been that we are training them for self-government. The most typical of that is our Indian Empire. A thousand and one reasons are given for a little more tutelage. . . . Now plain, practical common sense should come to our rescue. Nobody can imagine that any harm will come from independence. Let independence be granted.

Ten days later he reiterated this position. Indeed, in the columns of our weekly there appeared on January 4, 1928, an article by him in which he said: "If any party has been conspicuously sympathetic to the growth of nationalism in India and to the satisfaction of that spirit it is the Labor Party. . . ." Nor was he the only Labor leader to speak thus. There is no finer spirit in the party than that of George Lansbury. As far back as 1920 Mr. Lansbury thus echoed some famous words of Richard Cobden:

> There are more than three hundred million people in India; there are forty million of us English in the British Isles. We claim to know what is good for those people better than they do themselves. Was there ever impudence more colossal? Because our skin happens to be white we claim more brains than those whose skin has been browned by the sun. Whenever I look at Indians I feel ashamed of myself.

Now we are well aware of what Mr. MacDonald will face if he attempts to live up to his opinions. Fenner Brockway, M.P., has stated that if MacDonald should grant Gandhi's request for the release of the many political prisoners who have been rotting in prison *since 1915* eight or nine of the British governors in India would resign at once. This, Wedgwood Benn has not dared to face. The India Office is full of officials who live by British control of that teeming distressed country. Again, Mr. MacDonald is reported worn and tired as a result of the long and unhappy naval conference, his anxiety about the unemployment situation, the secession of Sir Oswald Mosley, and all the other difficulties which confront him. None the less we feel that he must meet the test which India offers; that he cannot evade the issue by falling back upon the intransigence of the Anglo-Indian officials. If he would keep his record clear he cannot long approve of Wedgwood Benn's Tory theory that it is right to jail a great leader like Gandhi on the excuse that he is disturbing or may disturb the good order of India. It is not Gandhi who is the disturber, but those countrymen of MacDonald's who insist on keeping India in tutelage. There is no moral salvation for the Prime Minister save to say again: "In all attempts to govern a country by a 'benevolent despotism' the governed are crushed down. They become subjects who obey, not citizens who act." We cannot conceive of a finer slogan for MacDonald to go down to defeat with than his own "Let independence be granted," for we believe that out of such a defeat would come lasting victory.

This question of the effect of office-holding upon the reformer is one of far-reaching moment. There is nothing so dangerous to the character, nothing so benumbing to the moral sense, no other pitfall half so deceptive—witness the fall of Woodrow Wilson. It is not to be disposed of by saying that the taming is inevitable; that the theorist must become the realist when he takes office; that practical considerations must take precedence of ideals. Those are moral traps; those are the excuses that men give for not living up to the best that is in them; for refusing to face defeat; for breaching principles they have upheld all their lives. That is the way of the politician, the professional office-holder. It can never be that of the true reformer.

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It Seems to Heywood Broun

SEVERAL readers have sent questions about newspaper work. "How does anybody get to be a newspaper columnist?" asks L. T. G. from Montclair, New Jersey, and a few others have sent the same query in various forms. I'm only one columnist, I can't speak for the rest. My answer would be, "It's mostly dumb luck." I don't know why it should be so, but newspaper jobs are very much sought after in America today. Almost every young man and woman fresh from college wants to be a newspaper dramatic critic or a columnist. And editors just brush them away from the doorstep. In some respects I'm glad they do.

But just the same I think newspapers are not so smart in the barriers which they erect against the entrance of the newcomer. When somebody comes to a paper asking for a chance to work the editor's first question is, "Have you had any experience?" And when the applicant says "No," the editor shakes his head very sadly and says, "I'm terribly sorry but I can't give you a job until you've had some experience."

"Well," says the applicant, "how can I get some experience?"

"Get a job," says the editor.

I believe that's known as a vicious circle. There was something like that once in a book I read when I was a child—a book called "Davy and the Goblin." One of the characters was a butter-scotch man and he used to complain that he couldn't run until he got hot and he couldn't get hot unless he could run.

From the point of view of us working newspapermen—maybe I ought to qualify that word "working," since a columnist lives by peculiar hours. If he is employed on an afternoon paper he ought to be up out of bed and on the job by three in the afternoon. If he lingers longer than that he is just plain lazy. Writing his column takes from half an hour to an hour—depending on how many contributions he gets. After his work is done he gets ready for dinner and then he goes to a show and after that a night club perhaps—that's called gathering material and it's very arduous and every columnist has to do it whether he wants to or not.

But I'm drifting away from the subject of how to be a columnist. I must repeat that the first injunction is, Be lucky. At least that has been my experience. In the beginning, or thereabouts, I was a baseball reporter. And then the dramatic critic died. I was a good baseball reporter and so they said, "Make him the dramatic critic." Something happened at the very beginning that was extremely helpful. I reviewed a show in which Miss Ethel Barrymore appeared, and gave it as my opinion that she was not so good. Just in that show I mean. But Miss Barrymore was annoyed and gave out an interview to a Sunday newspaper in which she said, "All the critics liked me except one who I understand is a baseball reporter."

"Of course," she continued, "I like baseball. It's our national game and all that, but there is a good deal of difference between the diamond and the drama, is there not?"

That helped me a lot. It irritated sporting editors all over the country and they began to write pieces saying it was much more important to be a baseball writer than to be a dramatic critic. They said that baseball reporters were much better writers than dramatic critics. *Collier's Weekly* took it up and I began to get national publicity. Fate was certainly with me. Six months after I became dramatic critic the book reviewer of the paper took sick. He didn't die but he was very ill and had to go away for his health. People around the newspaper office, particularly those that outranked me, began to look at me with suspicion. They thought I had the evil eye. I remember the managing editor got very cross one night when I said: "How are you feeling this evening? You don't look well. I hope it's nothing serious."

He thought that I was after his job too. But I wasn't really after any more jobs just then. It was terribly hard work being the combined book and dramatic critic. Particularly being the book critic. I had to write a book review every day and that meant that I had to read a book every day. At least I thought so then. I hadn't learned yet what an excellent review a critic can prepare by reading the blurb on the jacket and skipping through the first fifty pages. Of course, it is a little dangerous to review books you haven't read. A friend of mine was telling me just tonight of what a fearful mess he got into. He used to do his reviewing mostly by the titles and one week he had a long list of novels to do. One of them, according to the slip sent up to him, was called "The Missing Gallon." Naturally he thought it was a story about prohibition and in his review he spoke of the book's being a lively and exciting yarn about rum-runners and revenue men and the coast guard. It turned out that there had been a typographical error on the slip sent to the reviewer—the real title of the book was "The Missing Galleon" and it was about the Spanish armada. The author was very angry at the critic.

But nothing like that happened to me. I didn't dare say anything about any book with which I was not familiar. Still a day arrived when I came down to the office without having read anything. It was one of those lazy days when it was a lot too much trouble to read anything. But there was that blank space in the paper that I was supposed to fill, this column which had over it the title Books. I was in a predicament and in desperation I wrote a piece about my dog and my small son, even though I hadn't read either of them. No editor said anything about it to me the next day, and so a couple of days later when I fell down on my homework again I wrote a column about the farm I intended to buy some day when I had enough money. And this time the managing editor did send for me. He said: "That stuff you've been writing about your son and your dog and your farm is much more interesting than your book reviews. Keep it up." I was getting praise for being lazy. After that they changed the title of my newspaper department from Books to Books and Things and pretty soon it was all Things. I didn't read any books any more. I had become, quite by accident, a newspaper columnist. Finally, on account of there not being any books in it at all they had to drop that out and call the whole business It Seems to Me. And that's how I became a newspaper columnist.

HEYWOOD BROUN

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The Press Today

VI. The Philadelphia Cabbage Patch*

By OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

LIKE Pittsburgh and Chicago, Philadelphia shows clearly the devastating effects of the drift toward consolidations and disappearances in the newspaper field. Since I served on the Philadelphia *Press* in 1897 there have perished the following dailies: the *Press,* the *North American,* and the *News,* in the morning field, and the evening *Times, Item, Star, Call,* and *Telegraph.* There remain the *Inquirer* and *Public Ledger,* the *Record,* the *Evening Ledger,* the *Bulletin,* and the tabloid *Daily News.* There are, however, only four owners left: Cyrus Hermann Kotzschmar Curtis, who owns the two *Ledgers* and has just purchased the *Inquirer;* J. David Stern, an able publisher, who two years ago bought the *Record;* the McLean family, owners of the *Bulletin;* and Bernarr Macfadden, proprietor of the *Daily News.*

Only one of these, the *Record,* offers any real liberalism. Founded just sixty years ago, it prides itself upon expressing "the opinions and aspirations of enlightened men and women." It has certainly fought consistently for clean elections and better government, against debauchers of the ballot, and on behalf of exploited labor, and believes that it was chiefly responsible for the defeat of an outrageous $149,000,000 traction grab. Until recently it was a Democratic newspaper, highly individualistic in make-up, with an especially strong following in the rural territory adjacent to Philadelphia, notably in New Jersey. The *Record* is today conventional in make-up and independent in politics. The Democratic Party in Pennsylvania has dropped out from under it, and so it is reported ready for a new political line-up, leaning occasionally in the Republican direction. Not as to the city, however. There it refuses to go along with any of the bosses. In the national field it is distinctly opposed to reactionary Republicanism and is outspoken against the new tariff. Its editorials induced Gifford Pinchot to run for Governor again, but in the primary just ended it supported the wet ticket, Bohlen for Senator and Phillips for Governor.

It is of enormous importance to Philadelphia that the *Record* should succeed under its new ownership. Without it the city would be reduced almost to the pitiful level of Chicago, where there is no choice in the morning field save between Hearst and the McCormick's *Tribune.* For a city like Philadelphia to be dependent upon the McLean and Curtis dailies would be little short of a calamity. Hence it is encouraging to learn that this flower in Philadelphia's cabbage patch has been steadily growing under Mr. Stern's leadership—at least until the recent shrinkage in business, which has profoundly affected even the most prosperous dailies. Thus, its circulation rose from 113,300 readers in 1928 to 129,959 in 1929, and has been averaging around 140,000 of late, in 1929 catching up with the morning *Ledger* on weeks days. On Sundays the showing has not been quite so favorable. During the last quarter of 1929 the Sunday *Record* sold 122,347 papers, a gain of 23.2 per cent over 1928, while the Sunday *Ledger* disposed of 483,567 copies, and the Sunday *Inquirer* of 503,237. None the less it appears certain to succeed.

The kind of competition which Mr. Stern has had to fight can be understood from the fact that the Curtis papers sent out in April the following notice to newsboys: "If you persist in selling Sunday *Records* you will not be permitted to sell Sunday *Inquirers* or Sunday *Ledgers.*" The *Record* met this attack successfully and with entire good humor, saying that "it is the first time in Philadelphia journalistic history that one newspaper has been singled out as so important that its competitors decided to combine against it." About the same time the *Record* printed an editorial denouncing the *Ledger* for instigating through a Hearst news agency a false statement that the *Record* was for sale. From the same source, doubtless, have come the constant reports that the *Record* is not worth buying by the Curtis interests and is likely to "die of its own volition." That does not appear to me to be so certain, for Mr. Stern has had extraordinary success with his Camden papers, the *Courier* and *Post,* small-town dailies which he has built up to a joint circulation of more than 70,000. He is a man to be reckoned with, though it is plainly a most difficult furrow which he has now chosen to plow. Philadelphia is notoriously unreceptive to anything independent. He who undertakes to go counter to the political contractor-gang which controls the city, and to the sodden selfishness and contentment of the middle class as well as of the very prosperous, has a man-sized job on his hands. But Mr. Stern knows how to fight. Single-handed he thrice defeated the Baird machine in Camden—more strongly intrenched than Vare's in Philadelphia. Its fight upon him was most bitter and personal—in one month it had him arrested three times in the effort to drive this "carpet-bagger" out of town. He has owned six newspapers, all successful, all liberal, anti-machine, and fearless.

When we come to the *Bulletin* with its tremendous circulation of 550,000 copies we find one of the cleanest, dullest, most bourgeois of American dailies; one of the most conventional as well as one of the most prosperous, but quite courageous enough to hold even the greatest advertisers at bay. One turns over page after page of advertising fringed with reading matter, and sees how it is that the *Bulletin* has found its way into almost every Philadelphia home. It is kindly and decent, though cheap in appearance, has the necessary amount of jokes and comic strips and news photographs, calls itself independent Republican, is always against Vare, and has fought the traction ring. But it cannot become deeply interested in such a primary contest as has recently been ended in Pennsylvania, though it will take sides sharply when the election occurs. As a whole, however, in its eyes all is extremely well with the Republic in this best of all possible worlds, and there is no reason why

* This is the sixth in a series of articles on the American press. The seventh, What's Wrong with the *World?,* will appear in our issue of June 25. —Editor The Nation.

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any and every patriot should not sleep soundly provided the tariff is very high and the Communists are properly squelched. This newspaper represents its owners' viewpoint to a T; one must know it and them really to understand democracy in Philadelphia.

As for Bernarr Macfadden's *Daily News,* with its 200,000 circulation, it is not sufficient to say that it is like the general run of tabloids. There is a complication here in that ex-Senator William S. Vare, the boss of Philadelphia, owns 49 per cent of the stock—no doubt an extremely advantageous business arrangement, which can, however, hardly be said to leave the *Daily News* free to serve the cause of good government. The rise of the *Daily News* has been remarkable in its rapidity; its advertising is increasing while the other dailies are losing—Mr. Vare is, of course, able to influence the insertion of a good many advertisements, especially legal ones. Three years ago when it was losing $350,000 a year it was offered for sale. Today it is believed to be earning $250,000 or more annually.

There remain in this cabbage patch the three Cyrus H. K. Curtis dailies, and when we come to them we reach the nub of the Philadelphia situation and its most serious aspect. At the beginning of last March Mr. Curtis suddenly purchased the one-hundred-and-three-year-old *Inquirer,* together with land and buildings, from the Elverson heirs, for a sum variously put at $18,000,000 and $20,000,000. It is an open secret that the deal was engineered by John C. Martin, the husband of Mrs. Curtis's daughter by her first husband, who is now the real executive of the four dailies Mr. Curtis owns (the fourth being the New York *Evening Post*). Mr. Curtis had been in Florida; he was informed of the deal on his return, made an immediate inspection of the property, and the transaction was completed. The *Inquirer* has, however, been allowed to live—when Mr. Curtis purchased the *Press* and the *North American* he immediately destroyed those dailies and with ruthless cruelty turned their staffs out into the street with only a day or two's notice. Curiously enough, however, the policy has been to conceal the change as much as possible—the April 1 statement of ownership and circulation of the *Inquirer* being "buried" so far back in the paper that it even escaped the notice of some of the editors. The masthead of the daily is also not indicative of the Curtis ownership.

The *Inquirer,* which in 1840 startled the newspaper world by an entirely new departure in journalism, the purchase of the American rights for exclusive publication of "Barnaby Rudge" and "Master Humphrey's Clock" by a then rising young English author, Charles Dickens, had long been the Philadelphia Republican's Bible, aggressive in its attacks upon all who refused to worship at the Republican shrine. It was naturally extremely useful to the machine, over which it exercised a great influence; the machine had to be pretty rotten to come in for criticism at the hands of the *Inquirer.* As a hidebound party organ it had, in other words, no superior, and when it came to the tariff it gladly did the bidding of the membership of the Republican Club and the Manufacturers' Association. In brief, the *Inquirer* has stood for all the economic and imperialistic policies of the Republicans and is the most ardent advocate of the status quo that the most reactionary conservative could possibly desire.

None the less, its passage into the hands of Mr. Martin —for that is what it comes down to—is ominous. Should anything happen to the *Record* that gentleman will dominate the morning field of Philadelphia; as it is he reaches approximately 600,000 purchasers every week day and about one million on Sundays. This already so closely approximates a monopoly as to make it well worth while to get some idea of what Mr. Martin is after. That is not easy to define. It is, however, clear that he is extremely ambitious and that Mr. Curtis, who will be eighty years old on June 15, is more and more leaving matters in his step-son-in-law's hands.

It is also apparent that Mr. Martin is by no means hostile to the brood of politicians; during the recent primary the Curtis papers sat squarely on the fence, refusing to notice editorially one of the most exciting campaigns in the history of the State. But the *Inquirer's* editorial page had plenty of space for such thrilling subjects as Clean-Up Week, Dandelion Pickers Escape Fines, Lauding the Heroism of Motherhood, and Locust Plague Grows Worse in Egypt—all safe and sane and certain to offend no reader's sensibilities. In newspaper circles it is the belief that Mr. Martin has none of such principles as have guided Mr. Curtis in his journalistic ventures, and there is a great desire for more light upon his relations with the various groups of Philadelphia politicians. Certain it is that under Mr. Martin there will be nothing done to retrieve Mr. Curtis's own mistakes.

That gentleman has never even approached the success in the daily field which he has achieved with the *Saturday Evening Post* and the *Ladies' Home Journal.* He has not known how to succeed. He long tried to make a national newspaper out of the *Ledger,* but entirely failed, probably because he never really visioned what a national daily ought to be. There is nothing about the New York *Evening Post,* for example, to indicate that either Mr. Martin or Mr. Curtis can build a newspaper capable of making a profound impress upon the metropolis. Their editorial pages are never strong, or brilliant, or given to leadership. They economize in editorial salaries in accordance with the new trend which declares that the daily should not lead or seek to impose its beliefs upon others, but that it should be merely a reflection of our swift, superficial, pleasure-loving jazz age. Their editorial pages will continue to reflect the views of the rich, prosperous, and contented, and of those who profit by special privilege, who believe that the government should go into special tariff partnership with every manufacturer who is too inefficient to make money or is dissatisfied with the rate of his profit. Finally, if the columns of their dailies are clean and carry only worthy advertising, they are not wholly free from domination by the large advertisers. They will continue to be class organs—the mouthpieces of the class with which Mr. Martin and Mr. Curtis come daily into contact.

What hope, under these circumstances, can there be for an enlightened, independent, liberal public in Philadelphia? What hope, outside of the *Record,* that there will be a sympathetic interpretation of the aspirations and desires of the great mass of Americans? What hope that there will be a determined effort to allay the growing popular discontent by frontal attacks upon the evils of our social and economic life? These men are far too rich to look for any such leadership; millions roll in on them constantly.

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Mr. Curtis himself drugs the people of Philadelphia not merely by the deadly conservatism and intellectual mediocrity of his great magazines and their special appeal to Babbittry, but by the magnitude of his public gifts. Where George W. Childs, the former owner of the *Public Ledger,* was accounted a great philanthropist when he bestowed checks for $1,000 or $5,000, Mr. Curtis's generosity is evidenced by many millions. Business Philadelphia admires him profoundly, despite his serious intellectual limitations, because business men everywhere worship material success and Mr. Curtis's material success is surely a wonder of the business world. But to the development of the soul of America he has contributed nothing. Every thoughtful American must look with anxiety upon a situation in which Mr. Curtis's heirs will dominate, or nearly dominate, the mentality of the historic City of Brotherly Love and the sources of its news—and should aid as best he can the fight of the *Record* against that domination.

Big-Business Brains

An Open Letter to Senator Norris

By J. G. CURTIS

MY DEAR SENATOR NORRIS: In the recent discussion of Mr. Hughes's confirmation as Chief Justice you described the conflict between the interests represented by Mr. Hughes and those represented by yourself; and, according to the news dispatches, you said that you were frightened by the prospect of the America toward which mergers and combinations were hurrying us, an America in which every citizen would be the slave of a captain of monopoly sitting in Wall Street with his feet on a mahogany desk. Your foreboding and your description interested me intensely. I admired the stand you made, as I have often done. But as one who is in business, who works for such enterprises as you condemn, who believes in their social desirability, and who yet sympathizes with your purposes and admires your leadership, I should like to report, so to speak, from behind your target. I should like to tell you what that target looks like to an observer who is not alien to you in spirit, but who views the enemy from a different mental angle.

In the first place, I see nothing essentially personal in the forces you are attacking. Consequently, all that part of your attack which personifies monopoly with its feet on a mahogany desk misses because there is nothing like that here to be hit. In all my years of business experience, I have never seen a business man with sufficient intelligence to fit, even approximately, the picture you draw. Business men are notably lacking in intelligence of any breadth; what they do notably possess is either an ingenious alertness or a ponderous tenacity. And they exercise either the one or the other of these qualities almost exclusively in current emergencies, almost never in comprehensive programs covering long periods of time. The evil that they do is therefore to be stopped by an attack on their intellectual deficiencies rather than on their assumed intellectual powers. An illustration of my meaning may be found in a well-known incident in the earlier career of Mr. Justice Brandeis, now one of the members of the liberal minority of the Supreme Court. A number of years ago, as one of the attorneys in the Shippers Case before the Supreme Court, Mr. Brandeis supported his attack on the carriers' rates by showing that the railways were losing a million dollars a day by blindly neglecting improvements which scientific management would make possible. He made the issue not one of malignancy, but of stupidity. He won—and so did the railways, as a matter of fact, for instead of being merely thwarted, they were taught a lesson to the benefit of everyone, themselves included.

In the second place, the forces you assail, not being personal, are themselves social. Being social, they transcend all individual wills. You yourself apparently see them at times in this aspect, for you speak as if you sensed something inevitable in them. I confess that I see them habitually in that aspect. The breakdown of individualism seems to me a perfectly natural and wholesome thing. The needs of a great society, highly specialized as they are, cannot be served by individualistic means. We no longer live sparsely in the wilderness as our fathers did; the hardiness and versatility they exhibited were not matters of free election with them, but were required of them, on pain of death, by an inexorable environment. Our environment, on the other hand, requires of us, on pain of death, quite different virtues: it requires specialization, functionalization, division of labor, rationalization. A hundred years ago it was a virtue to chop down trees and build your own house; today to do such a thing would be a luxurious vice. Society cannot tolerate such ill-directed expenditures of individual effort. Neither can it tolerate such ill-directed expenditures of effort as the individual ownership and operation of business. It is quite as anachronistic to have groceries supplied by an independent grocer as it would be to have your clothes made at home.

And I urge this on behalf of the very people in whose interest you are active and valiant—on behalf, that is, of the great masses whose consuming needs are the starting-point and the criterion of every motion of economic activity. They are, as you contend, doing without too much that they should have and paying too much for what they get. The burden is laid on them, however, not by malignancy, but by ignorance.

Business men, I repeat, are not characterized by breadth of intelligence. I have worked with them for years, and there are few serious things that could be laid morally to their charge. They are children. They need leadership. They need something besides a shouting of Don't! Our great economic and social confusion is due to the fact that the entrepreneur has been taken at his own rating as a

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responsible moral agent. He is not. He is a good technician, a good man at routine, an industrious fellow. Like most specialists, he thinks that everything depends on him, but in reality he has no more notion where he is or where he is going than a bat at noonday.

The leadership that he requires is, consequently, of a comprehensive and positive sort that you yourself should supply, a leadership based on a firm sense of the public good. It should be a leadership that looks in the same realistic fashion at a corporation as at a telephone instrument. The corporation is a social agency. It has marvelous potentialities. But it is so new that as yet we don't know what to make of it. It is like Watt's steam engine or Edison's first electric lamp. Its capabilities for social accomplishment on behalf of those masses of people whose interest is yours are incalculable. But those capabilities need to be developed under a comprehensive leadership such as your own with a view to deriving the greatest social good out of the instrumentalities that our peculiar modern genius has developed—such instrumentalities as the laboratory, the electric motor, the radio, the tractor, the corporation, the large-scale enterprise.

Viewed organically, the concentration of commercial and industrial control is a process of socialization. And it is not peculiar to this country, but universal. In England, they are trying to give it leadership, but so belatedly that the case looks pretty hopeless. In Russia, they are going about it much more determinedly. And the significance of what they are doing is probably beyond anything else in modern history. In Russia, as here, there are enormous populations, enormous social potentialities, enormous natural resources. In both countries, things are moving together on an enormous scale. But this is the difference. In this country, we try to go forward with our scientific discoveries, but still holding on to an eighteenth-century individualism that is contemporary with phlebotomy and the hanging of sheep thieves; whereas in Russia they see modern culture as a whole, and in one comprehensive plan they sweep together and coordinate farm, school, factory, dwelling, movie, distribution, hygiene, research, invention, and technique. We do misgivingly what they do with a will. Personally, their bloodiness is hateful to me, and I shrink from it. All Americans do. But our squeamishness will not make the Soviets fail. And it should not blind us to the intelligence of their program in its civil aspects. It is not a time for us to quote Oliver Goldsmith's venerable lines in "The Deserted Village," but to grasp the realities of twentieth-century mechanistic civilization and master them. If we don't, the Soviets, without lifting a finger against us, may see us crash some day because we neglected to learn our own job.

I trust that the importance of the issue and the sincerity of my own concern will excuse the informality and impetuousness of my address. I believe I am not presumptuous in declaring that I share your hatred of privilege and selfishness and your desire for a universally diffused welfare. I believe I am in a position within the structure of what you call Big Business to see certain things you do not see. And I feel that I should tell you of them in the respectful hope that I may contribute even in a little way to the effectiveness of your leadership.

Very sincerely yours,

J. G. Curtis

In the Driftway

AN unexpected gift, gratifying but alarming, has disturbed the Drifter's usual tranquillity. A rash admission to a friend of a mild taste for exotic flora and fauna is responsible. When he said "exotic" the Drifter had in mind nothing more daring than a vague preference for, say, scarlet hibiscus flowers as against geraniums, a tribe which he has never looked upon with favor. He is not an expert, and has been known to confuse larkspurs with hollyhocks, but he is quite clear about geraniums. As for hibiscus flowers, he is not sure that he has ever seen any, but they call to mind a South Sea island and a beach and lovely girls who would wear them in their hair.

* * * * *

NOT long after this admission the Drifter found himself the perplexed guardian of a *Darlingtonia Californica.* The *Darlingtonia,* though a plant in name, is carnivorous, and has something the appearance of a cobra rearing up to strike. The florist's boy who brought it was coldly superior. "Just give it a bit of raw meat when it's hungry," he said; "steak will do." The implication was that steak would only just do. "Perhaps it prefers human flesh," suggested the Drifter facetiously. "Couldn't say, sir," said the boy, and he left the room, whistling. The Drifter cautiously experimented by putting a scrap of meat into the capacious mouth of the *Darlingtonia.* There was something a little sinister in the gradual and complete disappearance of that meat. Since then the Drifter has felt himself on the horns of a dilemma. Should he, in the interests of his peace of mind, overfeed his charge, or starve it? He has not been able to decide, and has pursued a wavering course. On the one hand, he has a feeling that carnivorous animals, lions, for instance, are rather less savage when not given meat. A lion whose diet is porridge and sprouts is excused from certain of the more formidable conventions of his kind. On the other hand, the Drifter has sometimes an uneasy feeling that, if denied red meat, the creature might make shift with a bit of Drifter, creeping on him in his sleep, perhaps, or hiding behind a door. True, up to now it has remained rooted like any geranium, but he has his doubts, and on the days when these doubts assail him he may be seen ambling into the nearest restaurant, ordering for himself a meal which he may or may not want, and asking the waiter for a bit of raw meat to carry away with him. "For a cat, sir?" said one waiter with a sympathetic gleam in his eye. "No. For a plant." "I see, sir," said the waiter coldly.

* * * * *

A SOLUTION has at last occurred to the Drifter, a solution not entirely kind, but interesting. He plans to present this jungle hybrid to a vegetarian friend of his. He cannot help wondering how his friend will cope with it. First, of course, he will try to teach it to love string beans or nut bread. But if it proves obstinate, will he go out and round up bits of steak to keep it alive, or will he let it go into a decline and die? And if the latter, will his conscience hurt him? The Drifter would love to know, but unfortunately he has lost his friend's address.

The Drifter

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Correspondence

Veto the Tariff!!

To the Editor of The Nation:

Sir: I have seen with much pleasure the words in large capitals Veto the Tariff on the front page of *The Nation*. That subject has been on my mind for some time, and there is a point that, as I think, needs emphasizing. President Hoover won the admiration and the affection of the world for his heroic and beneficent anti-starvation work in Belgium and elsewhere. The spirit in which the tariff bill has been conceived and formulated is the very opposite of that which expressed itself in the relief work of the war period, and the effects of it, in quarters where near-starvation prevails, will correspond with the unworthy spirit. Happily, the final shaping of the measure is, in some degree, still in our President's hands.

New York, May 28 John Bates Clark

Has India Rejected Non-Violence?

To the Editor of The Nation:

Sir: It is ironical that, simultaneously with the publication of S. K. Ratcliffe's statement in *The Nation* of May 28 that Indians have rejected the central doctrine of Gandhi's teaching, non-violence, we should have news from India that, censored though it is, proves beyond doubt that Indians are keeping to this doctrine in an amazing fashion. Casualties (I use the *Herald Tribune* figures from Webb Miller's admittedly mutilated account) to the number of 630 on one side, with no mention of anyone injured on the opposing side, surely do not indicate any great departure from the non-violence to which the Indian satyagrahis are pledged. Lest anyone set this down to cowardice, I should like to say that Indian publications, which come to me regularly, tell quite a different story. One eyewitness to some of the frightful cruelty—and this against men who are merely offering themselves for arrest—writes, "Never have I seen such bravery . . . the meekness and non-retaliation under attack is nothing short of superhuman."

Paying for one's freedom in the "coin of suffering" is not the part of cowards. Courting arrest—to the end that available jails may be filled to overflowing—does not come from any but the most selflessly brave. The type of resistance employed by Gandhi is far more dangerous to the individual than the ordinary type of insurrection, as it is harder to combat.

What Gandhi calls, for want of a more definite phrase, "indecent assaults" have been the treatment of the satyagrahis right along, as highly reliable reports show; and yet this extreme of pain and humiliation is not alone borne, but courted, day after day. When all the facts have come through we shall know that Indians have *not* rejected their great leader's Ahimsa —doctrine of non-violence—but have, in the acceptance of it, risen to heights of courageous and spiritual achievement.

New York, May 23 Grace Gilman

To the Editor of The Nation:

Sir: Let me enter a protest against the inadequate and lopsided review of C. F. Andrews's book, "Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas." When George Washington was leading the American Revolution, what would have been the force of a discussion of his ideas that dwelt chiefly on the irrational points in Washington's theology? There are irrational points in Gandhi's, but this extraordinary man, though in prison, is still leading a revolution much bigger than ours, and prompted by wrongs infinitely greater.

There are two sides to British rule in India. We all know of the good side; we have been hearing about it all our lives. To most Americans, the bad side is as unknown as the dark side of the moon. Those wishing to understand it should read three books: "The Economic History of India in the Victorian Age," by Romesh Dutt (E. P. Dutton and Company); "England's Debt to India," by Lajpat Rai (B. W. Huebsch); and "India in Bondage," by J. T. Sunderland (Lewis Copeland Company). If they have not time for all, let them read the last. In India it is a penal offense to sell this book or to own it.

The British are the best administrators of colonies and dependencies in the world, but even they cannot make a bad system work well. Imperialism is a system inherently vicious. What the British have done in India is not a bit worse in principle than what we have done in Haiti and elsewhere, but it is on a larger scale, and has had a longer time to work out its bad results. Gandhi's ideas on this subject are as sound as they are strong. Even his emphasis on the spinning-wheel, which seems so strange to Westerners, has a good reason under present conditions in India. Many of his ideas show a singular union of saintliness with practical sagacity.

His great effort to achieve his country's freedom without bloodshed is worthy of the highest respect. However much violence may develop, there will be less than if the most beloved man in India had not used all his great influence against it. And whatever aspect the struggle may take on, every lover of liberty should wish success to India's cause.

Boston, May 30 Alice Stone Blackwell

For a *Nation* Club

To the Editor of The Nation:

Sir: A few of us in Philadelphia are desirous of meeting other readers of *The Nation* and would like to form a *Nation* Club. Any who are interested should address me at 944 North Randolph Street, Philadelphia.

Philadelphia, May 14 Leon Stern

Contributors to This Issue

J. G. Curtis is the pseudonym of a careful student of present-day financial and industrial developments.

Thomas Hornsby Ferril was the winner of *The Nation's* poetry contest in 1927.

Mark Van Doren is editor of "An Autobiography of America."

V. F. Calverton is editor of the *Modern Quarterly* and author of "Three Strange Lovers."

George E. G. Catlin is a member of the boards of directors and of editors of the *Realist*.

Stanley J. Kunitz has just published a book of poems, "Intellectual Things."

Lionel Trilling is on the editorial staff of the *Menorah Journal*.

Pierre Loving, long resident in France, is now living in New York.

C. Hartley Grattan is the editor of "The Critique of Humanism."

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Summer Book Section

The Economics of Dollar Books

By HENRY HAZLITT

IT is too early to make any facile predictions regarding the ultimate effect of the announcement by a group of publishers that they are cutting their prices of new novels from the present level of two dollars and two dollars and a half to a dollar, the "most sweeping revision in new book prices in the history of modern publishing." The most one can confidently do at the moment is to indicate certain possibilities.

The question must first of all be considered in its economic, even in its bookkeeping, aspects. How is such a radical slash possible? If publishers can sell novels at a dollar and still make a profit, most laymen will want to know, haven't they been making an inordinate profit with books at two and two and a half dollars? The answer lies in the fact that the publisher's unit cost of production on any book decreases with the number of copies he produces of that book. If the lowering of price increases sales sufficiently, then a publisher who makes only a moderate profit with a novel selling at two dollars may still make a moderate profit when he cuts the price of that novel to a dollar.

Let us see how this works out for a typical novel. We shall assume that two thousand copies of this novel are printed to retail at two dollars a copy and that (publisher's paradise!) every copy is sold. Costs and profits will then run something like this (the following calculations are based on actual figures supplied to the writer by publishers):

Cost of plates	$700
" " printing	100
" " paper	80
" " binding	240
Author's royalty	400
Publisher's overhead	240
Advertising	160
Total cost of production	$1,920
Income from sales	2,320
Publisher's net profit	$ 400

In this account it has been assumed that the author's royalty is 10 per cent of the retail price of the book, that the publisher's overhead expenses average 12 per cent of the retail price of each book, and that the book has been sold to booksellers, jobbers, and others at an average discount of 42 per cent, i. e., that the publisher gets $1.16 for a book that retails for $2.

Now if the publisher were to cut the price of such a book to $1, and if this reduction did not result in any increase in his sales, it is quite obvious that his net profit would be transformed into a heavy loss. Still selling to the "trade" at a discount of 42 per cent, he would receive only 58 cents a copy for his books, or a total of $1,160. When we allow for the fact that the author's 10 per cent royalty would automatically be reduced by $200, and even if we assume that the publisher might save $100 on a cheaper binding, he would still confront a deficit of $460 in place of a profit of $400.

But what the price-cutting publishers are counting on is their belief that books at half their former prices will meet a very substantial increase in sales. Suppose that the publisher is able to sell ten thousand copies of the book at a dollar. His cost sheet (assuming that he uses a cheaper binding, and assuming, also, that he can still keep his overhead expenses down to an average of 12 per cent of the retail price) will run like this:

Plates	$700
Printing	300
Paper	400
Binding	700
Royalty	1,000
Overhead	1,200
Advertising	800
Total costs	$5,100
Income from sales	5,800
Net profit	$ 700

I do not mean to suggest here that a reduction in the price of a book would result in a sale five times as large, but merely to indicate the very great reduction in unit cost possible when a comparatively large number of books is originally published. This result arises from the fact that the chief single item in the cost of a book is usually the cost of the plates, which remains fixed regardless of the sale, while other items (with the possible exception of overhead expenses) vary approximately in direct ratio with output. For two thousand copies of a two-dollar book the cost of plates is almost 40 per cent of total costs; for ten thousand copies of a dollar book the cost of plates is only 14 per cent of total costs. The unit cost to the publisher, consequently, falls from 96 cents a book to 51 cents. On a second ten thousand copies, the cost of the plates may be written off altogether, and the unit cost of production becomes 43 cents.

Whether novels at an original price of a dollar become economically feasible, then, depends solely upon the extent to which a radical reduction in price will increase sales. The plan cannot succeed unless the demand for books proves to be what economists call elastic—i. e., the number of books sold must increase in more than an inverse ratio to the reduction in price. In other words, if a publisher sells only double the number of books he otherwise would have, the plan will fail; if he sells only 50 per cent more it will of course fail worse. Where the publisher at present has to sell 2,500 copies of a book to "break even," he will have to sell anywhere from 5,000 to 6,500 to do so with a dollar book. To make the same net profit from a dollar book as from a two-dollar book, he will have to sell at least two and a half times as many; to make the same net profit from a dollar book as from a two-dollar-and-a-half book, he will have to sell at least three times as many.

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(And the early results of the present move may easily be misleading. As long as a few publishers cut their prices and the majority do not, dollar books—popular novels, detective stories, and the like—may increase their sales merely *at the expense of* "replaceable" two-dollar books in the same class. The increased sale of these dollar books, in other words, would not necessarily indicate any real, or at least any proportionate, expansion of the book market as a whole. In that case, a large part of the sales increase would be found to disappear if competing publishers met the lower prices; which would mean, of course, that publishers would simply be in a worse plight all around.)

It is not difficult to see, therefore, why there is such a wide difference of opinion among publishers on the present price war, with the majority still declaring that to price books originally at a dollar is economically unsound. The price-cutting publishers are making a bold experiment; for no one yet knows just how "elastic" the demand for books is—just what effect changes of price can have on sales. On the one hand, there are such precedents as "The Story of Philosophy," selling at five dollars, to indicate that high prices do not keep the public from buying the books it wants; on the other hand, there are the very large sales of the dollar reprint series to indicate that a reduction in price may have a very material effect in increasing sales—that a book which has stopped selling at two dollars to five dollars may start selling again at a dollar.

If the various price-cutting plans succeed (each of those so far announced is slightly different from the others) what is likely to be their broader effect? Here again it is better to indicate possibilities than to attempt confident predictions. It must be kept in mind to begin with, however, that when a publisher turns to dollar books his mistakes become more costly than when he is dealing with two-dollar books. There has always been a large gambling element in the publishing business. It has been estimated that the average sale of a novel is only about 1,500 copies, and perhaps one is safe in saying that the publisher loses money on four out of every five books he sells. He must depend on his successes to carry his failures. As a dollar book, if it failed, would involve more serious losses, it seems probable that the tendency of publishers would be to print fewer books. Such a result is commonly regarded as a consummation devoutly to be wished; but it is not the number of books that is important, but their quality. Whereas today the publisher who wishes to avoid losses must ask himself whether a book is likely to sell at least 2,500 copies, he will have to begin asking whether it is likely to sell at least 5,000 to 6,500. And this question seems likely to hurt two classes of books—those too bad to have an assured mass appeal, and those too (subtly or esoterically) good to have an assured mass appeal. There is a possibility, in short, that the dollar-book field may develop into a sort of publishers' Hollywood. Certainly it would accelerate the present tendency toward concentration of advertising and selling effort on fewer titles. On the other hand, there is the possibility that, just as the tabloids obtained an enormous circulation without materially affecting the circulation of the regular newspapers, so popular novels at a dollar may find a field of their own while more expensive volumes with a narrow appeal will continue to sell in the same quantities as at present. Still again, it is possible that American publishers may begin on a wider scale the European practice of printing all books of whatever quality in paper covers first, and then leaving it to readers to decide which books are worth keeping and binding durably after they have once been read. If the present experiment should succeed, it seems likely to have important secondary effects. Will existing dollar reprint libraries become fifty-cent reprint libraries? What will happen to the business of the rental libraries? Will the so-called drug-stores become regular instead of crisis bookstores? From many angles the new experiment is extremely significant. Can mass selling be applied to belles-lettres? We must wait and see.

Dialogue in Kansas—1850

By THOMAS HORNSBY FERRIL

Some dim rememberer of quarter-decks had brought
A globe of the earth to Kansas and had given
This fading world to the new bride in the clearing,
And the bride loved best the blue where the ships were driven.

"The prairie rolls like sea, new bride, but is not sea,"
The globe had said, "but you are a woman fair
Enough to be a shining harbor's name, or the dream
In the wind that makes the tallest ships go there."

"I will be shining harbor then," she told the globe,
"With the oldest prairie beating on my breast,
And the blue of it shall sing like sea in me forever,
And my tall man will say that this is best."

"But your tall man will never stay," the globe had said.
"He plows as if no women wait for ships,
For there's a westering, ever a westering,
That is another lover to his lips.

"You must be that to him, if you be shining harbor,
And you must be another prairie far
From here, and another home he cannot see from here,
Perhaps the Oregon will be his star.

"After the ice, but still before the grass has come,
You will know this. Gently he will have curled
His fingers through your hair at night and darkly stroked
Your body with the circles of the world.

"Those hours when you are Oregon and not his bride,
He'll be your lover home a night from sea;
Morning will pull his draw-knife on new oxen yokes,
Sundown will hack an axle from a tree.

"He'll say this little world is like a wagon wheel,
And he'll get a wheel and prop it in a yoke,
He'll show you that from here to Oregon is less
Than a span from one spoke to another spoke.

"And wheels like this will roll to Oregon, you'll say,
But not to him, and if you must go there,
Who must you be to him in Oregon at night,
To feel sea fingers moving in your hair?"

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The New American Drama

By JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

WHEN I joined the staff of *The Nation* there was an understanding between its editor and me to the effect that all dramatic critics should be shot at the end of five years of service. Six seasons have now passed since I thus gaily set a term to my existence, but justice has been tempered with mercy and it has been agreed, not only that my life shall be spared, but that, after a banishment of fifteen months' duration, I may return to the practice of my profession. Accordingly and with a muttered *Auf Wiedersehen* I depart from Broadway—though not without the few words which follow by way of farewell.

I am aware of the fact that dramatic critics are popularly supposed to view the stage with a jaundiced eye. The necessity of making a business out of what ought to be a pleasure is thought to result inevitably in bad temper, and to produce a state of mind which leads naturally to the choice of What's Wrong with the Theater? as the topic which the critic is most eager to discuss. Yet it is not, in my case at least, a "loathèd stage" which I quit, for I must confess that I find in myself an optimism which others may not have noticed, and that, after a good many hundred evenings in our various playhouses, I still believe the New York theater to be a not unadmirable institution. Indeed, the contemporary American drama seems to me to compare very favorably both with the other departments of contemporary American literature and with the plays produced during any except a few widely separated epochs in dramatic history.

Perhaps neither our dramas nor our novels have achieved that perfection of form which alone is capable of enabling any work of literary art to endure beyond the age in which it is written, but our plays, like our novels, have at least been the result of a conscientious effort to be as sincere and as significant as their authors could make them. And though I have heard graybeards lament our decline since even the recent days of Daly and Mansfield and Drew, I cannot bring myself to regret the change which has given us the dramas of O'Neill, Behrman, Stallings, Anderson, Barry, et al., in place of those of Boucicault, Clyde Fitch, and Bronson Howard. Perhaps the plays of the generation before this were better acted. I am willing to take on faith the statement that they were. But from my own reading I know that those of our own day have more substance in them.

The drama is, of all the forms of art, the one which seems to have the greatest difficulty in maintaining contact with the interests, the opinions, and the tastes of the most enlightened portion of any general public. Not without reason the adjective "theatrical" has come to be used as synonymous with all that is false, artificial, and preposterous, for the drama has been content to remain during whole half-centuries at a time a form which no one regarded as a possible vehicle for a "criticism of life." Twenty years ago the American drama was, moreover, still in the condition from which the European drama had begun to rescue itself some twenty years before that. By comparison with the novel it was timid, superficial, and trivial—all but untouched by the intellectual and moral forces which had revolutionized the thought and feeling of intelligent people. It was as flaccid and simple-minded as though Zola and Tolstoy and Nietzsche and Anatole France—to say nothing of Ibsen and his followers—had never written. The same people who read Hardy and Wells and George Moore in their libraries complacently accepted the most trivial sentimentality in the theater, because they had come to regard the theater as an institution not to be taken seriously. On entering its doors one regressed by force of habit to a simpler level of intelligence, and anyone interested in it might have been pardoned for doubting whether or not it could ever again be used by an adult mind.

Yet today our theater is at least once more a part of the main stream of our artistic life. I do not mean merely that it is once more a place where "problems" may be discussed with the same frankness as in the novel, but also that the attitudes which it exhibits toward characters and deeds are the same as those exhibited in other forms of creative writing. It has rescued itself from a set of infantile conventions which were almost as absurd as those which now stultify the movies, and it has become once more a channel through which intellectual and artistic impulses can flow. The playwrights who have written during the past twenty years have accomplished this rescue, and even if they have not written a single play likely to endure they have accomplished much by making the theater once more intellectually and artistically respectable. Twenty years ago the drama was hardly a department of contemporary American literature; today it emphatically is.

By a stroke of good fortune it so happened that the first play which I was called upon to witness in my professional capacity was the Anderson-Stallings "What Price Glory?" and that play may be taken as typical of the kind of excellence that has been found in the drama of the six years which followed. Scarcely had the curtain risen upon this play before one was aware that one was in the presence of some kind of originality and power. Out of the rich, living, and Rabelaisian language there was gradually built up a tale unlike any tale of war hitherto presented upon any stage, and marked by certain excellences which were, moreover, of a purely dramatic kind. It had, to be sure, no easily definable thesis. Indeed, the public argued hotly concerning the question of whether it was to be regarded as "for" or "against" militarism and war. And yet, without any recourse to didacticism, it achieved something beyond even the striking naturalism which characterized it. Here, translated into dramatic terms, was the record of a terrible experience set down in a manner which managed to convey some sense of the peculiar quality of that experience and thus to differentiate it from the experience of other generations with the same ghastly phenomena of war. It was certainly no mere cold academic retort to those who have glorified martial adventure, for it communicated something of the excitement, of the fierce atavistic joy, which its protagonists sometimes felt. And yet, at the same time that it thus com-

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municated to the spectator the extent to which the typical American soldier was like all other good soldiers of all time, it managed to suggest how different he was also—how far, for example, he was from feeling the unmixed emotion which Shakespeare had so perfectly described when he spoke of the "pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war." Here, in other words, was a play which did what only a play, and only a play written in the twentieth century, could have done—which, that is to say, reconstructed with a vividness almost equal to the vividness of experience a series of events, and at the same time discharged the tension of an audience by formulating for it the confused emotions to which a knowledge of, or a participation in, the war just past had given rise. When the curtain descended I felt that a theater which could even occasionally reveal plays like that was a theater worth studying, and I have not, during the six years which have followed, changed my opinion.

Europe today has no group of young playwrights comparable in importance to that which founded the modern drama a generation ago. The impulse which led the earlier group to create the drama of social discussion has pretty well exhausted itself, leaving the newest generation of playwrights in England, France, and Germany to write without the advantage of any common trend. And while I do not by any means wish to maintain that the contemporary American playwrights are sure of a historical importance equal to that achieved by the Ibsens, the Shaws, and the Hauptmanns, I do believe that one may see from such a play as "What Price Glory?" both that they are superior to their present European fellows and that there is at present in the process of formation an American tradition of dramatic writing which is gradually detaching itself from the tradition out of which the established classics of modern European drama grew. Let me see if I can suggest what that tradition is.

In various of their plays, Ibsen, Hauptmann, and Shaw achieved a purely dramatic excellence in varying degrees, but there is no doubt of the fact that their chief significance is to be found in what they taught. The best measure of their importance is the influence which they had upon the moral and social thought of their contemporaries, and Shaw, at least, so far accepted this as a generally applicable measure of dramatic importance that he declared Shakespeare to be a trivial dramatist, because, in effect, "Romeo and Juliet" contained no criticism of the Elizabethan social system. But when, to choose at random, we consider such plays as "What Price Glory?" "Strange Interlude," "Street Scene," and "The Green Pastures," it is obvious that these plays do not teach anything definable and that, if we consider them "important," it cannot be for the reasons that "A Doll's House" or "Man and Superman" is important.

Now I do not for a moment believe that the authors of these American plays said plainly to themselves, "Art can achieve an importance which is not identical with the importance of the doctrine taught." As a matter of fact, the American drama began as an offshoot of the European, and it began to be serious when it began, like its model, to deal with material sociologically significant. But even in the work of certain individual dramatists like Eugene O'Neill or Elmer Rice one may trace the process by which didacticism is gradually replaced by a feeling for effects more purely aesthetic, and the result is that plays like "Strange Interlude" and "Street Scene" are, whatever one may think of their absolute merit, obviously efforts to write plays more like the plays of Shakespeare than like the plays of Shaw—in the sense, that is to say, that they aim less at the enforcement of a moral than at the achievement of that miracle by which pain is transmuted into beauty, which goes under the name of Tragedy. I would not, be it understood, be thought to maintain that art has no human importance, but I do maintain, first, that the American drama has differentiated itself from that of the masters of the modern European drama by ceasing to cultivate the "problem play," and second, that the direction of this differentiation is admirable because comedy and tragedy perform for the human being a function not performed by either the profoundest sociological treatise or the plays whose purpose is primarily sociological.

I have sometimes been asked what "Strange Interlude" means, and I could reply only that no answer of the sort which the inquirer obviously expected is possible. The question is a question of the sort which we learned, and quite properly, to ask in connection with "An Enemy of the People" or "Man and Superman," but it is not the kind of question any sensitive person would think of asking in connection with "Othello." Such a play does not, in that sense, "mean" anything. It has, that is to say, no doctrine. And if we are considering not magnitude but manner, "Strange Interlude" *is like* "Othello." Defending this same play before a hostile audience in Boston I was once interrupted by a Communist who demanded to know whether or not the author had in this play "any message for the workingman." I replied—without, I am sure, being understood—"Yes, in so far as the workingman is also a human being." But in that question and that reply lie, if only they might be elucidated, the whole meaning of the relation of art to life and the whole defense of the effort of the contemporary American dramatist to make out of the materials of contemporary American life comedies and tragedies acceptable to the souls of contemporary American audiences.

The sciences of sociology, politics, and economics have as their purpose the adjustment of the individual to his material surroundings. There is, besides, the science of ethics, which endeavors to teach us how we ought to act, and there are, still further, schools to train us for the practice of the professions by which we hope to earn the means of sustenance. But every man is something more than a citizen, a parent, and a breadwinner. Even the Communist workingman is a human being also, and as such he has a problem only distantly related to the problem of making his living and raising his family. He has the problem of learning how to accept, with fortitude if necessary and with joy if possible, the experience of living, and of seeing others live—the problem of finding a way to "accept the universe." And it is the answer to that problem which art attempts to give, by showing how the chaos of experience may be contemplated under one or another of those various patterns among which comedy and tragedy are the most inclusive and the most satisfying.

I am not deluded into supposing that the American theater achieves for us that purpose as well as, let us say, the theater of Shakespeare achieved it for the Elizabethan age. But I respect it because it seems to me to be addressing itself to the effort to do so.

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Hardy's Other Life

The Later Years of Thomas Hardy: 1892-1928. By Florence Emily Hardy. The Macmillan Company. $5.

MRS. HARDY'S biography, of which this is the second and concluding volume, seems to be little more than a chronicle of her husband's thoughts and movements as he himself recorded them in his journal. But she makes up for the meagerness of her method by having a great man to reveal, and she reveals him, or allows him to reveal himself, with a most interesting fulness. There will be more orderly and ingenious books about Hardy than this, for criticism surely is not done with him; but Mrs. Hardy will remain the authority on the subject, at least as long as she lives and keeps possession of the journals and the letters.

Whether she has held back anything important, whether she is aware of any secrets, one can only guess. For my own part, although I have found in neither of the two volumes the thing I wanted to find, I am willing to believe that it never existed. What I have always wanted to know is the reason, if any, for Hardy's inclination toward tragedy. This man whose every story and poem, almost, is concerned with failure or disappointment—did this man suffer once himself? So far as I can see he did not; any more, at least, than most men do, and that may be a good deal. He seems never to have been thwarted or blasted in any of the numerous ways he invented for his heroes. The answer, if this be true, is simply that he was possessed of the tragic temperament, and possessed of it in some extreme degree explainable only in terms of his genius. When "Jude the Obscure" was under fire in 1895 he wrote to a friend: "As for the story itself, it is really sent out to those into whose souls the iron has entered, and has entered deeply at some time of their lives." That may be enough. Certainly the iron was in his soul, and it may make no difference when or how it got there, or whether, as is possible, he was born with gloom in his eyes and a dagger in his heart.

Mrs. Hardy naturally makes much of the furor over "Jude the Obscure"—an epidemic of stupidity among the English (and American) reviewers which, coming as it did just after the unpleasantness concerning "Tess," confirmed Hardy in his resolve to quit the field of prose fiction. The reviewers of the poetry which followed were scarcely less stupid, and Mrs. Hardy naturally becomes exercised about all that too. She almost makes her story, indeed, the story of Hardy's reception by the public. But it is not the main story. The main story is of how a man at fifty-five went on to live another life, of how a seasoned novelist who might very well have been exhausted by the composition of seventeen extended narratives took up another kind of pen and produced, in the more than thirty years to come, ten volumes of verse which made him—though few persons seem to be aware of the fact—one of England's greatest poets, past or present. A year or so before his death he told his wife that his only ambition, so far as he could remember, had been "to have some poem or poems in a good anthology like the 'Golden Treasury.'" He has already achieved that end, but a greater end is easily in sight—fame for the "Collected Poems," and a general acknowledgment that "The Dynasts" is so far the masterpiece of the twentieth-century muse.

Mrs. Hardy says enough to convince me of what I had suspected, that Hardy's interest in his poems was deep and serious. The hoarseness of their note was studied; their cacophonies were carefully planned; their oddities were almost regular. He was constantly experimenting with meters, as he was constantly searching the world for subjects sufficiently unusual. "We tale-tellers," he said, "are all Ancient Mariners, and none of us is warranted in stopping Wedding Guests unless he has something more unusual to relate than the ordinary experience of every average man and woman." He sought subjects in newspapers, old books, and the numerous histories of real people which came to his ears; he found them also in himself, for he was rich not only in fancy, but in observation and reflection. "Courage has been idealized; why not fear?—which is a higher consciousness, and based on a deeper insight." "I often think that women, even those who consider themselves experienced in sexual strategy, do not know how to manage an *honest* man." The whole point, I suppose, is that Hardy was himself an unusual man. I wonder, finally, if any light is thrown upon his character by the entry which he made in his journal on November 13, 1917: "I was a child till I was sixteen; a youth till I was twenty-five; a young man till I was forty or fifty."

MARK VAN DOREN

Mr. Sinclair's Alger Novel

Mountain City. By Upton Sinclair. A. and C. Boni. $2.50.

"MOUNTAIN CITY" is exactly the kind of novel Horatio Alger might have written if he had possessed a social conscience. It is a rapid-racing narrative, gaspingly rapid after it achieves its momentum, vivid with episodes one more incredible than another, rising to a climax cinematographic in intensity and thrill. Its characters, however, are no more, or no less, real than those in "Phil the Fiddler," and its theme is hardly more convincing than the old familiar one that is to be found in almost any Algeresque fiction. One never comes to know the people in the book in any more intimate sense than one comes to know the people one reads about in the newspapers. The names of the people in the newspaper are there; their features are described with photographic precision; their actions are recorded in definite detail—and yet we somehow never know them, and, what is more, seldom become very anxious to know them. There is no doubt about the fact that they are real, as real as ourselves. But their *realness* is never communicated to us unless we happen to know them *personally*, which means that we know them in terms of something which is more intimate than names, features, or actions. We know them, it might be said, as part of ourselves, and can realize their presence even when they are not to be seen or heard. Now it is the task of the artist to make his characters into *personal* creations of that variety. In doing this lies the subtlety of his art. Fiction which does not do this is not art. And it is for that reason, namely, because it fails to achieve that subtlety, that "Mountain City" is not art.

Most attacks upon Sinclair's fiction have attempted to explain its weakness in terms of its propaganda. That, I believe, is a false emphasis. Propaganda, after all, is too vague and mischievous a word to be employed as a critical tool. A strong case can easily be made out to show that much great art has been propagandic in purpose. For a long time English literature served as an agency for moral propaganda. Addison, Pope, Johnson, Dickens, Trollope were all propagandists for morality in one way or another. George Bernard Shaw is one of the most avowed propagandists of our age. Even T. S. Eliot today has asserted that "the greatest poets have been concerned with moral values." It is not propaganda that ruins fiction, then, but the failure of the writer to achieve that contactual communication between his materials and his audience. It is not propaganda that makes "Mountain City" an inferior piece of work. It is its failure to communicate its conception that is the cause of its failure.

Every intelligent American, liberal as well as radical, is in sympathy with Sinclair's satire—and "Mountain City," it should

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be added, is a satire. The difficulty in appreciation, therefore, is not with the theme but with its execution. The story of the novel is simple. Jed Rusher, a poor boy, the son of "a driver and a handy man," learned early in life that money is the root of all success. When he grew up he soon saw that money was the source of privilege as well as power. Hinks, the rich ranch-owner, was able to "beat his women because he had the money and they didn't." Jed Rusher, as a consequence of this realization, decided that at all costs he would not remain poor. "Get money, Jed Rusher, get money"—this became the challenge and inspiration of his life. Everything else was sacrificed to that end. Every action that he undertook, once he had got into the good graces of the millionaire single-taxer, Mr. Warrener, was as carefully calculated as the hours on a clock. Even his marriage, effected by subterfuge and vicious stratagem, was an expression of this same logic. His success as a financial titan, which was marred but slightly by his wife's desertion, found its finale in his decision to reward his former university chancellor with an endowment of fifty thousand dollars to establish "a chair to combat single tax and other economic fallacies."

Now this whole story, we are informed, is not an invention. It is based upon the real life of a certain individual in Mountain City, which to all appearances and intents is Denver. The reality of the story, however, as was pointed out before, does not make it a reality for the reader. Authentic as a living fact, it is incredible as a literary fiction. Its satire fails because it never gets beneath the surface of its material. In other words, it is interesting as a newspaper report but unconvincing as a novel.

V. F. Calverton

Credo of the Engineer

Toward Civilization. Edited by Charles A. Beard. Longmans, Green and Company. $3.

PROFESSOR BEARD, the doyen of American political scientists, has here edited a sequel to "Whither Mankind?" In the former book literary gentlemen expressed their views on a civilization founded on the basis of a machine technology. In the present volume technologists, "insiders looking out," tell us their reflections on the upshot and outcome of their work. For, as Professor Beard adds, "are not technologists thinkers as well as doers?" As is customary with collections of this kind, the key in which the articles are set varies considerably—all the way from contributions adipose with facts to Dr. Pupin's personal explanations of why he does not regret that "fifty-four years ago I deserted my beloved Serbian oxen and ran away to the land of machines."

The heart of the whole matter is to be found in a phrase used by Mr. Harvey Davis:

> All that can be said either for or against the machine is that it is making possible (not probable—or improbable—but merely physically possible) a spirit and culture which, both in intensity and in depth of penetration into the masses of the population, can conceivably far outshine anything that the world has ever known.

The issue, of course, is precisely whether the civilization of the machine has anything at all to do with intensity of culture and whether, in so far as there is a relation, it is not an inimical one. Let us grant that machine technology at the moment increases worldly prosperity (Mr. Stuart Chase warns us that, under capitalism, it may increase goods while decreasing jobs). It enables the undertaker to buy an automobile and to call himself a mortician—an outrage which shocks the sensitive soul of Mr. Aldous Huxley. Indubitably it renders possible more cheap books, more cheap film shows, more cheap radio sets broadcasting to those who would (and those who would not) hear the insistent dialogues of Amos 'n' Andy, more automobiles, more traffic regulations, and more sheep-herding.

This may be "depth of penetration of spirit into the masses of the population." In a sense it is true: humble men who before only gossiped about the tavern, the dance, or the prayer-meeting now entertain hopes of sending their sons to a hotel-management course at college or even read a *Harper's* article on Einstein or the Duty of Disobedience. Dignity is démodé, inconsistent with this age of speed. Mr. Kenneth Burke has told us, in the *New Republic,* that "dignity is Ptolemaic, indignity Copernican." And nobody would wish to be "Ptolemaic," that is, self-centered, when he can revolve round something else (it doesn't matter much what), in fact, be "Copernican." It nevertheless happens to be true that, from the point of view of those who believe that the external means of expressing culture are the rewards of those who have first attained admission to a class disciplined in internal culture, this whole system is topsy-turvy. From the point of view of the introvert, from the point of view of the entire European tradition which traces from the Hellenic antithesis of busi-ness and culture, the whole system is an anathema, a nihilism of values.

We are at the parting of the ways. On the one side lies all that we have, through the ages, meant by culture: introspection; cultivation of the soul; leisure for some; distinction between those who did attain a standard of human dignity, whether as aristocrats above the vulgar or as elect above the worldly, and those who did not attain this standard; a civilization controlled from above by rare standards of excellence; wealth negligible save as a conspicuous means of displaying these standards. Over against this we have the new philosophy with its heterogeneous affiliations to equalitarianism, democracy, and the rise to power of money. It is pronouncedly extrovert and objective. It frankly accepts the world and the flesh and has its doubts about the soul. Values are to be found by steeping oneself in the living stream of external affairs. Not leisure for some, but the chance of an executive position for all. Skepticism of distinctions as, at the best, self-conscious, probably sham, and always priggish. Democracy and the abolition of class power. Prosperity and the welcoming of every new technical invention. The importance of wealth as a means to prosperity for all. That is the new program, and the writers of this book contribute to show how inventions, engineering, and business have conspired to make it feasible.

With this new philosophy of Americanism I confess to a profound sympathy, as well as to a speculative curiosity about what is the most momentous spiritual change of our age. To the Hegelian there is nothing shocking in substituting the values of objective reality for those of subjective reality, to finding individualism only in adventure and initiative and not at all in self-cultivation. The cultural connections of this philosophy are not with Paris and Weimar, but Moscow and perhaps Rome are connected with it. Its greatest dangers would seem to be that its exponents will not realize how immense is the movement that they have started. It is foolish to nourish a blind hope that a man in spare hours, which improved machinery may allow him, can acquire the old culture which was a manner of life masterly with a sense of superiority and power. To its very marrow it is hostile to him. The new philosophy cannot be taken so easily, as if it were a patchwork of all colors, a ragout of all desirable things. The facts on which it has to be based are coming into existence fast; it requires master-minds to think out all the implications. It may very well be that this denial of the unique individual, this elevation of all individuals to efficient cooperation, this zest for the technological, the external, the organized whole, spell in the end the philosophy of communism. Not for nothing Count Keyserling (who has inspired moments) declares

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America to be the most socialistic of countries. The engineers and experts who soberly contribute to this volume supply us with lines of thought—one wonders whether or not unwittingly—which may end in our subscribing to the Count's belief. Let those who have eyes to read, read.

GEORGE E. G. CATLIN

Art Without Chest

Poems. By Peter Quennell. Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith. $2.50.

ELSEWHERE, in the epilogue to his book on Baudelaire and the symbolists, Mr. Quennell remarks on a contemporary preference for those forms of art anticipated by Jules Laforgue in his phrase, "l'Art sans poitrine," as if the artist belonged to a race already conscious of exile and, retreating steadily before the new barbarians, demanded a goddess not too ponderous to embarrass him in the years of his flight and banishment. Mr. Quennell's own twenty-one poems, the labor of nine years, handsomely printed for this American edition, are themselves excellent specimens of that "slender, bosomless Art," sexless, exacting, abstruse, serious, and elegant. An evasive, disquieting art, engaging in no trade with the conventional emotions; a personality dividing and dividing again, as if to escape integral annihilation; a voice threading out of a hero's tomb, a sea grave, a fountainhead, an angel's brain; a distinguished address to goddesses and hermaphrodites; a sidelong vision, fugitive, with "thoughts all turned back like birds against the wind."

The flexible, but never loose, rhythms of Mr. Quennell's unrhymed verse depend mainly on the image rather than on the idea.

> Round an external stimulus [he writes in a short foreword] like the branch or twig which Stendhal speaks of, tossed into the salt mine, images, gradually accumulated, sometimes from experience, sometimes from reading, had suddenly flown together and formed novel and disturbing shapes. It seemed important then that the spontaneity of the process should not be impaired; that the oddity of the crystals might excuse their fewness . . .

When the crystal is of this nature:

> Now huddled waves had lulled their bursting foam
> And slight clouds laid their breasts upon the sea;
> The sullen winds, head downward from the sky,
> Solicited his movement on their viols,

I fear that it is more odd than virtuous, and I should be glad for a cleaner vision, more proper to sight, with less of the ballooning phantoms of twilight and the waking dream.

The Sunflower, a short early poem employing concealed rhyme, the record of a single moment of intense perspective, is flawless and powerful:

> See, I have bent thee by thy saffron hair,
> O most strange masker,
> Towards my face, thy face so full of eyes,
> O almost legendary monster.
> Thee of the saffron, circling hair I bend,
> Bend by my fingers knotted in thy hair,
> Hair like broad flames.
> So—shall I swear by beech husk, spindle-berry,
> To break thee, saffron hair and peering eye,
> To have the mastery?

Much of Mr. Quennell's work appears neither inevitable nor decisive, more like fragments of a larger poem unwritten than like achieved entities, the images accumulating without fusing, accumulating often without manifest purpose, either because the genetic emotion has been strangled (in fear of the obvious?), or else because that emotion is too ambiguous, too "poetic," to sustain its identity from stanza to stanza. The more ambitious pieces are successful only when the crystals of imagery cohere to a central branch of impulse; cohering in The Flight into Egypt to a narrative device, in Leviathan (I) to a profound symbol of the perfectible and corruptible flesh. I have space to quote only a few lines from Leviathan:

> Leviathan drives the eyed prow of his face,
> With the surge dumbly rippling round his lips,
> Toward the Atlantic shore;
> Not flat and golden like the Cherubim,
> Or a face round and womanish like the Seraphim,
> But thick and barbed—the broad, barbed cheeks of Donne.
> . . . . . .
> The salt had scurfed his body with white fire
> And knotted the rough hair between his breasts,
> And as he rose delicate Atlantis trembled,
> Tilting upon the sea's plain like a leaf.

A broad full-bosomed poem it is for Mr. Quennell to take with him from "the twilight of literature" into the spiritual exile that he prophesies!

STANLEY J. KUNITZ

A Transcendental Prude

Philine. From the Unpublished Journals of Henri Frédéric Amiel. Translated by Van Wyck Brooks. With an Introduction by Edmond Jaloux. Houghton Mifflin Company. $3.50.

AMIEL is in many ways the most complete example of that malaise—called, variously, spleen and Weltschmerz; Wertherism, Faustism, Hamletism; epigonehood, the sick will—to which, some hundred years ago, the Western world fell prey. To describe that malaise here is neither possible nor necessary, for a great part—perhaps the most relevant part—of the literature of these hundred years has been engaged in its description, from Arnold and de Vigny to Eliot, from Stendhal and Turgenev to Hemingway. And there is no space to guess at its social causes, which must include the whole history of the West.

Whatever its name, its kind, and its causes, it has manifested itself in the feeling that between the soul of man and the uses of this world there is a necessary and rigid divorce. This is not a philosophical and reasoned conclusion; indeed, the trend of philosophy has been in quite the opposite direction. Rather is it a multiple personal intuition. Sometimes it is experienced as a loss of savor from the world (as in Stendhal), sometimes as a loss of strength and desire from the individual (as in de Vigny and Amiel), sometimes as both (as in Eliot). In a more religious age these manifestations would have been regarded as a normal part of the preliminary paraphernalia of religious conversion. This, indeed, they sometimes become, but on the whole the sufferers from cosmic despair have adjusted their lives—if at all—without the ministrations of orthodoxy.

Amiel was not only one of the greatest sufferers from the malaise but he was its most thorough and devoted investigator. In him the sense of the divorce between man and the world was raised to a pathological intensity and he lived his whole life in it. "Journal of a man who has been poisoned (the hour and a quarter before his death)"—so runs a note which Amiel made, perhaps for a projected piece of fiction. And his own journal is almost exactly that: he too has been poisoned, and he keeps the record of the many years before his death. He has been poisoned by the ideal, which, as he understands it, is necessarily a foe to the real. Physically and spiritually he is oppressed by listlessness and inertia. The ordinary deeds of life have little significance; the ordinary personal fulfilments

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attract him in spite of his philosophy, but he despises them.

So thoroughly did Amiel live his life in the melancholy disease and so thoroughly did he canvass it in the best pages of his "Journal intime" that he has become the very symbol of the sick will. Edmond Jaloux, one of the editors of this new selection from the Journal which has been called "Philine," objects, in his introduction, to the literary handling which has petrified Amiel into a symbol and to the diagnosis which has declared his will sick.

M. Jaloux's first objection has point, but it must be directed rather at Amiel's editors than at his critics. The first editor of the Journal, Mlle Mercier ("la belle Calviniste," as Amiel called her), adored Amiel and had no intention of representing anything less than the platonic beauty of his soul. By her selections (published in 1883)—and by her alteration of the text—she placed him in a moral and emotional vacuum. Bouvier's edition of 1923, by adding to the selections and restoring the original readings, by lightening the religious emphasis and by allowing the diarist's religious musings and a first kiss at thirty-one, gave back to Amiel some semblance of humanity. But even Bouvier's edition was largely a collection of "beauties" which left Amiel still in a vacuum. "Philine," which is Amiel's record of his only love affair, gives him the full reality of a man and takes considerably from his value as a symbol. It becomes hard to interpret him in terms of a world tendency of the spirit and necessary to interpret him in terms of psychological predisposition and physical economy.

But M. Jaloux's second contention, that Amiel's will was not sick, is scarcely borne out. M. Jaloux cites Amiel's activity as a teacher, as a writer of bad verses, and as a diarist, and concludes that no sick will could have carried on such activity. But it is, of course, not by physical activity or achievement that we may measure soundness or sickness of will but by the subjective reaction to events.

What the quality of that reaction was in Amiel, "Philine" gives us perfectly. An unknown young woman has written to him and, after tortuous doubts, Amiel meets her. After tortuous doubts he becomes intimate with her. For a while the friendship is simple enough; they fall into the relationship which is usual between Amiel and sensitive women, in which, much like Richardson, he plays father confessor. (He could not always keep the relationship paternal, however; he remarks that, though he has made none, he has received five or six proposals —and refused them all.) Very soon Philine wants more than paternalisms. As for Amiel, he cannot fall in love; he has a terror of the real; he is disgusted by physical love. But at thirty-nine he is ashamed of his virginity. He develops a lust for lewd books and pictures. His dreams disturb him. And he sees in Philine his Madame de Warens, with whom he can have his experience and have done with the whole business of sex.

This most delicate of men, by his very excess of delicacy and hatred of the gross, begins to coarsen his friendship. In his desire to learn about sex and have it over with, he begins to see Philine very simply as a sexual instrument. He decides to attempt a consummation and does not. He moralizes away his indecision and despises himself for restraint. At last he takes Philine. But what a disappointment! Is that all? And (astounding phrase!) "at the price of my first fruits."

"The fear of what I love is my evil," Amiel says. The relationship continues but Amiel is constantly attacking it. It fades from passion back to friendship. He contemplates marriage but is deterred. In his fiftieth year, moved by gossip and the suspicion of disingenuousness on her part, Amiel breaks with Philine.

It is not a new Amiel that "Philine" gives us, but merely an Amiel whose sick will is turned from the cosmic and eternal to the mundane and diurnal. The cosmic priggishness of Amiel

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in vacuo was merely a little irritating, but this mundane priggishness of Amiel facing life cannot but be exasperating, even disgusting. Nevertheless, it is not mere charity that dictates to us the necessity of respect for this transcendental prude, for he is, as M. Jaloux says, one of the few men who has tried to tell the very whole of the truth about himself.

LIONEL TRILLING

History as Fiction

Guerra. By Alfred Neumann. Alfred A. Knopf. $3.

IN "The Devil," "King Haber," and "The Rebels" Alfred Neumann showed with what success psychological values can be applied to historical characters and events. In each one of these books we note that the author has proceeded on the assumption—an anathema, I imagine, to most professional historians—that the arcanum of facts must not be too reverently searched or worshiped. To put it another way: history-writing and fiction meet at that focal point where both the historian and the novelist begin to revise and color the available data, which has been, of course, already tainted by the dust of time. Both go in quest, not of "ultimate truth," but of sound values. In modern philosophy these values are called percepta; nor need we think that they are themselves apprehensions of pure reality; for there are, it is conceded, many veils between our ordinary perceptions and the thing we are seeking, commonly called the truth.

Alfred Neumann in the present book takes up the revolution of the Carbonari, as in "The Rebels," and rewrites it for us from the viewpoint of Guerra, the leader. The story begins with Guerra's release from the island of Elba. It is both effective and plausible, and the dramatic crises—of which there are many—are not at all forced. They occur naturally in the flow of the tale, which is thick with intrigue, dark plots, the scheming of prelates and aristocrats, love and lust, the shedding of blood, and the half-finished talk and action of conspirators who scarcely dare trust one another.

Guerra is in love with the Princess Maria, who is the mistress of the Grand Duke, the enemy of United Italy. He is also sinisterly attached to his own sister, who marries the head of the Radical Party. In the end he is shot when about to address his faithful followers in the piazza at Rome. From a balcony a blind man exclaims: "Why—why isn't he speaking?" The novel is full of just such dramatic touches. And it is this sort of literary device that best gives us the clue to the difference between the ordinary kind of history and the historical novel that perhaps justifies itself by the urgency of its inner truth.

PIERRE LOVING

The Mahabharata Blues

The Art of Reading. By A. R. Orage. Farrar and Rinehart. $2.50.

A. R. ORAGE has a vast reputation for profundity, and indeed is more than a literary critic in the eyes of his intimates: he is a sage. But I fail to see what it is that so interests our Columbuses of the spirit, for I can find nothing in the man except an Englishman who happens to be a fairly interesting critic. And it would be a gross bit of flattery to say that as a critic he deserves the majuscule.

This latest book of his is made up of selected excerpts from literary notes originally printed in the *New Age*. It is amusingly miscellaneous, and whoever tried to get some order into the chaos did not do a very good job. In fact the book would

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have been just as interesting if it had not been marked off into sections, and more interesting if the labor so expended had gone into dating the excerpted passages. Fortunately Orage knows how to write, and however they are presented his remarks have point. They were, most of them, written controversially, and they still bite and sting. They make good literary paragraphs.

Of course in a book made up of paragraphs the number of ideas which the author presents is large, but with a fair degree of accuracy it may be said that Orage's principal beliefs are these: (1) that the first duty of a literary critic is that he study texts; (2) that style is the man; (3) that biography and literary gossip are a plague and a nuisance; (4) that most current literature is journalism; (5) that we have gone as far as we can with the intelligence, and what we now need is to draw upon some other human faculties for knowing; (6) that Western European literature is hopelessly dry and uninteresting and needs to be revived by contact with a radically new fecundating force, which force, in his opinion, is bound to be the "Mahabharata."

(1) No one in his right senses would deny that Mr. Orage is quite correct in insisting that the business of criticism is the study of the texts of literature. (2) In his effort to prove that style is the man Mr. Orage carries his dogma to absurd extremes, even deducing the moral character of a writer from the nature of his prose. (3) His anxiety that the text be studied leads him into an excessive depreciation of biographical fact. So far does he go in this direction that my impulse is to defend even literary gossip rather than admit the validity of Orage's strictures. (4) Calling what one doesn't happen to like "journalism" is a quite popular dodge, but so overworked as to be unimpressive, especially when one's author writes: ". . . popular writers (I mean journalists) like Zola, Bourget, Maurice Barrès, and André Gide . . ." (5) I have many times lately had occasion to say that I do not agree that intelligence has yet proved itself an incompetent instrument for solving the problems facing mankind. And certainly when the appeal is from intelligence to mysticism, true or false, one cannot but draw back with reasonably polite disdain. (6) Orage's appeal to the "Mahabharata" as the body of literature which is to bring in a Western European renaissance leaves one pretty cold, since it is obvious that his reason for thinking so is its mystical content.

Together with these major ideas one finds in Orage a host of minor notions which are even less appealing. He makes a monotonous appeal to tradition. For instance, he writes that a "critic's principles of judgment should be the established principles of the world's literature," and on another occasion makes reference to "the established laws of literature." What are these "laws" beyond such elementary ideas as the necessity for communication, the revelation of original insight before the writer deserves the honor of praise, and others of the kind? So long as they remain undefined they are concealed blackjacks for knocking out the unsuspecting aspirant. Orage is a linguistic imperialist, holding that anything written in the so-called English language must be judged by English standards. This is a curious notion to find in a man like Orage, but it is there. At bottom every Englishman is a nationalistic patriot and most of them are imperialists. Orage talks too much about the common and vulgar (like an Englishman!) on the one hand, and the noble on the other, that is, he is a snob in his thinking and has never analyzed these terms to discover that they are survivals from a feudalistic social situation and have a distinctly snobbish connotation when used today.

Mr. Orage's reputation as a sage seems to rest on two pillars: first, his constant reference to Sanskrit writings, and, second, his devotion to "psychological exercises," whatever they may be. There is, it is alleged, an aura which hangs about him, and his mere presence plus the utterance of a few commonplace words is enough to change the course of one's life. By way of

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illustration I may refer the reader to Margaret Anderson's "My Thirty Years' War," pages 268-270. In any case, the point is that Mr. Orage is a pleasant fellow, well read in literature, who has a weakness for the esoteric and the vague. He makes a pretty obvious appeal to the soft spot in the American mentality, the spot that allows men like Count Keyserling to flourish in this country.

It is not at all curious, I think, that but two American critics, so far as I know, would acknowledge the influence of Mr. Orage: Gorham B. Munson and, with a chuckle in his beard, Ernest Augustus Boyd.

C. Hartley Grattan

Notes on Fiction

Money and Other Stories. By Karel Capek. With a Foreword by John Galsworthy. Translated from the Czech by Francis P. Marchant, Dort Round, F. P. Casey, and O. Vocadlo. Brentano's. $2.50.

An interesting group of tales, noteworthy for their keen insight and for Capek's restrained sympathy for his characters. These latter are all men and women of weak will tortured by circumstance into one proud gesture of defiance—after which they sink back into their habitual spiritual mediocrity. What one misses in these stories is style (though the stiff and undistinguished prose may be the fault of the translators) and that warmth and depth which fiction has when it is rooted in a recognizable national life. Capek's civilized cosmopolitanism, admirable for a play of ideas such as "R. U. R." works against him in this little volume of short stories. They have that curious coldness which results from a conscious desire to make them comprehensible to many different peoples.

Wishbone. By Stirling Bowen. E. P. Dutton and Company. $2.50.

This volume, by a new young writer, consists of three long short stories. The first, An Imperfect Crime, is a clearly conceived if somewhat lengthy fictional indictment of American judicial methods; the second, Townsman, by far the best of the three, is a realistic study of the minor tragedy implicit in the wasted life of a small-town moron; the final story, Some Go Away, deals with more subtle psychological states and falls into sentimentality and vagueness. Mr. Bowen has an honest and searching mind and a feeling for little souls that reminds the reader of the early Sherwood Anderson. The first novel from his pen should be worth reading. His main defect is his insensitive Middle Western prose, which suffers from a youthful revolt against undue color or variety. Mr. Bowen's career will be hindered rather than helped by the stupid publisher's blurb which informs us that his style "recalls the structural beauty and strength of modern architecture."

The Fiery Dive and Other Stories. By Martin Armstrong. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

Only one of these stories attains a higher level than that of merely agreeable or sympathetic writing. Sombrero is a remarkable account of a court martial held in 1810 upon an English captain who was guilty of needlessly marooning a disobedient sailor. The tale, which appears to be drawn from actual maritime records, is stamped with a grave and bitter irony. The others, though they are all nicely written, are less notable, and seem to be the products of a patient mind studying life at second or third hand. The Widow of Ephesus and Saint Hercules are merely pseudo-classical exercises of the sort which delight the "literary" English reading public. The Fiery Dive would be a good story if A. E. Coppard had written it. In the Wilds, with its ridiculous portrait of a "strong" lover, is perilously near to the bathetic. The longest story of the group, Portrait of the Misses Harlow, is a study of the contrasting temperaments of two sisters. It is intelligently conceived and well enough written, but the characterization has an abstract, almost pedantic, quality. In general, the volume is not up to Mr. Armstrong's earlier and fresher work.

O. Henry Memorial Award Prize Stories of 1929. Edited by Blanche Colton Williams. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

This is the annual selection made from the more conventional American magazines. As the editor, with the persuasiveness of a circus barker, puts it: "Here are realism, romance, fantasy, humor; stories of character, plot, and local color; here are, besides one of Paris and one of England, stories of the South, the West, and the East of America." The prize-winner, Big Blonde, by Dorothy Parker, is one of those slick, ironic, modernist character studies that is likely to fool an unsuspecting reader into overrating it. Mr. Howard's story of mental telepathy is too attenuated for our taste. Mr. Wilbur Daniel Steele contributes his annual unreadability; and Margaret Leach bears off the palm for contributing the cheapest and vulgarest tale in the collection. Her contribution, Speakeasy, is one that Fannie Hurst might be proud to sign. By far the cleverest writing is that to be found in Mr. Bromfield's The Apothecary, which, despite its melodrama, is a fascinating macabre yarn; but the stories which gave us the most pleasure are precisely those which are least pretentious and "artistic," namely, the humorous pieces: The King of the Cats, by Stephen Vincent Benét, Two Red-Haired Women, by Don Marquis, and Professional Pride, by Ruth Burr Sanborn. The last-named, which is a farcical tale of the misadventures of a circus fat lady, is really funny. In general, however, one finishes the volume wondering why year after year it continues to get itself published. It is only necessary to read the editor's introductory remarks to realize that her standards of selection are hardly artistic ones.

Fables. By Theodore Francis Powys. The Viking Press. $2.50.

Mr. Powys remains the strangest writer in English, but his uniqueness is likely to lose some of its savor if he continues to repeat himself. "Mr. Weston's Good Wine" was a remarkable book; "The House with the Echo" was not, and these "Fables" bear still more obviously the mark of a talent that should not expend itself so prolifically. One tires a bit of Mr. Powys's peculiar, morbid pessimism which was so fascinating in his earlier books. In these "Fables" his spring winds are too consistently "cold and clammy," his ponds too inevitably "filled with sour mud and cold tadpoles." After a few pages of this his twisted view of the world begins to appear a trifle funny, and one begins to think of him as a sort of Gloomy Gus, carrying on interminable muttering conversations with corpses, fleas, withered leaves, worms, spittoons, and blind hens —the heroes of these philosophical chronicles. Here and there one catches a glimpse of the pure gold, but for the most part the mine seems overworked.

The Royal Woman. By Heinrich Mann. Translated from the German by Arthur J. Ashton. The Macaulay Company. $2.

Heinrich Mann is looked upon as a kind of godfather by certain of the younger German novelists, and in his own country enjoys a reputation almost equal to that of his brother Thomas. But to those not afflicted with the myopia which goes with joining literary schools and movements there seems to be no good reason for comparing the two. Heinrich Mann scarcely touches the foot of Olympus. "The Royal Woman"

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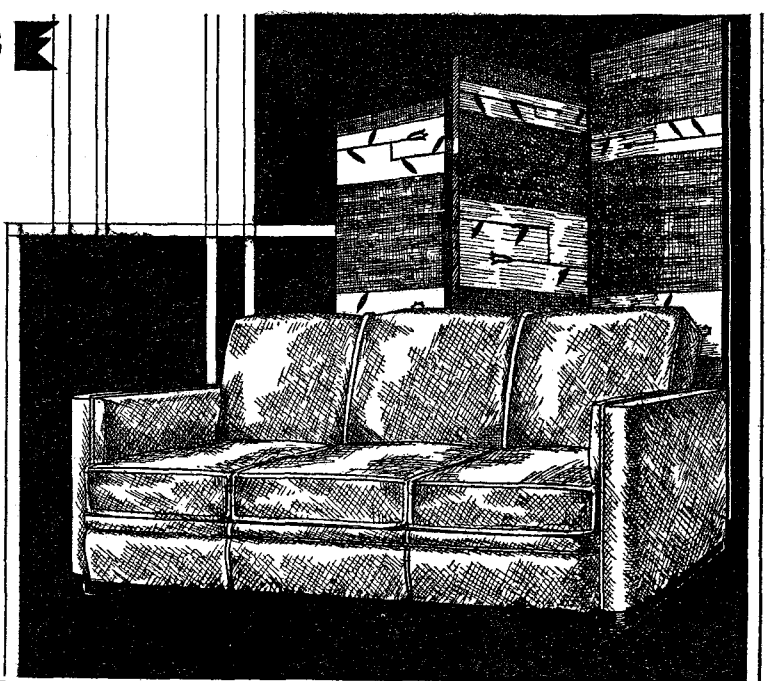

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Bourru, Soldier of France. By Jean des Vignes Rouges. Translated from the French by Ernest Hunter Wright. E. P. Dutton and Company. $2.50.

Written by a French soldier before the armistice and first published in France over ten years ago, "Bourru" stands second to Barbusse's "Under Fire" in order of publication among the serious war novels. It is not, strictly speaking, a novel at all, but a series of sketches describing the hard fighting around Vauquois in the Verdun region in 1916 as it affected Bourru, the peasant soldier, who is less an individual than a type, a composite poilu created to serve as a point about whom the sketches may cluster. Comparing it with recent war novels, one is struck by a difference which appears to be due chiefly to the difference in the times. The novelist of the World War who looks back from the vantage-point of today tends to give his characters the full and comprehensive bitterness which only the intervening years have brought to realization. "Bourru," while equally realistic, sensitive, and sincere, is nevertheless impregnated with a spirit of idealistic patriotism. This Bourru suffers, he hates it all, he trembles and sometimes flinches; but the little poilu carries on, happy to seize any respite that may come his way, willingly undertaking the most desperate assignment if he must. That the emotionalism of these stories is overkeyed is natural under the conditions.

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Films

Stark War

ACCORDING to one of Bernard Shaw's pet theories the stage in the matter of ideas is usually ten years behind literature. It would be difficult to say how far behind the movies are, for as a rule they care precious little about ideas. But there is one exception. Let the idea attract public interest, let the book in which it has found expression be a best-seller, and no expense will keep the film companies from producing the book as a movie as quickly as they can get the rights. During the past year the Great War was the most popular subject in literature, and for once, to refute Bernard Shaw, also on the stage; and so "All Quiet on the Western Front," as well as "Journey's End," has already found its way on to the screen. Need it be added that both cost tremendous sums to produce (it is said, two millions in the case of "All Quiet"), and that both have been unprecedented box-office successes?

There can be little doubt that Remarque's "All Quiet" is not a great literary masterpiece. At least this was the conclusion that I arrived at after I had found that nearly every page of the book required a special focusing of imagination in order to bring out in clear relief the episodes and facts that stud the author's guileless and inarticulate prose. Nevertheless, there is no denying the interest and importance of the story as a human document. No book had spoken so courageously and, granting the necessary effort of mental readjustment, so vividly of the sheer horror of war—of man's relapse into bestiality with its frenzy of fear and rage, of his physical suffering and moral prostration. It is just as such a document that "All Quiet" emerges in a film of the same name (Central)—a terrifying document that reveals the carnage of war with staggering force. Battle scenes have been represented in many a picture, but "All Quiet" surpasses them all in the stark horror and madness of the business of fighting. Although the picture is not devoid of gentler moods, and is sprinkled generously with captivating humor, the predominant impression is that of life in the raw, of existence stripped of all adornments and bared to the bone. For this reason the total effect produced is not so much the tragedy of war as its callous bestiality. One is staggered, and shaken, and almost ready to sob, but one is not really thrilled. It is probably because of the elemental quality of its material that "All Quiet" is not so good a drama as "Journey's End"; but its appeal is more immediate, and technically it is a superior piece of cinematic craftsmanship, for which achievement Mr. Milestone, who directed the picture, deserves unstinted praise.

Considered as a picture of an unfamiliar land, "Turksib" (Eighth Street Playhouse) is quite exciting. The strange Asiatic types and the primitive mode of living, contrasted with the invading mechanical civilization, provide sufficient material to make the picture extremely interesting. There is also an imaginative touch in the treatment of detail which does credit to the picture's director, Mr. Turin. He is not so successful, however, in his attempt to dramatize the stirring feat of the construction of the Turksib railroad. There is a great deal of hectic movement in his characteristically Russian technique of "cutting," but this movement lacks the necessary force to make the progress of the construction, its strain and effort, its setbacks and its victories, as dran tically effective as a subject of such potentialities would have been made if treated by a Griffith. This defect notwithstanding, "Turksib" is a fine picture, and should not be missed by anybody who is interested in the art of the movies.

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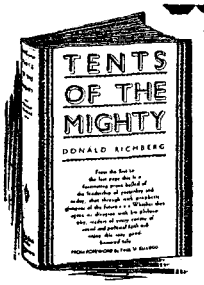

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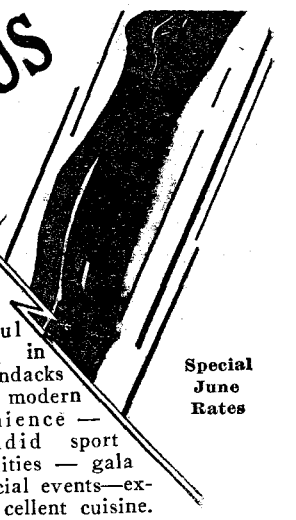

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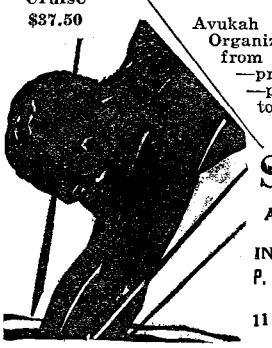

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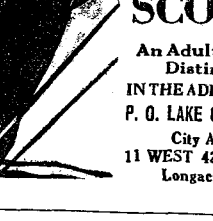

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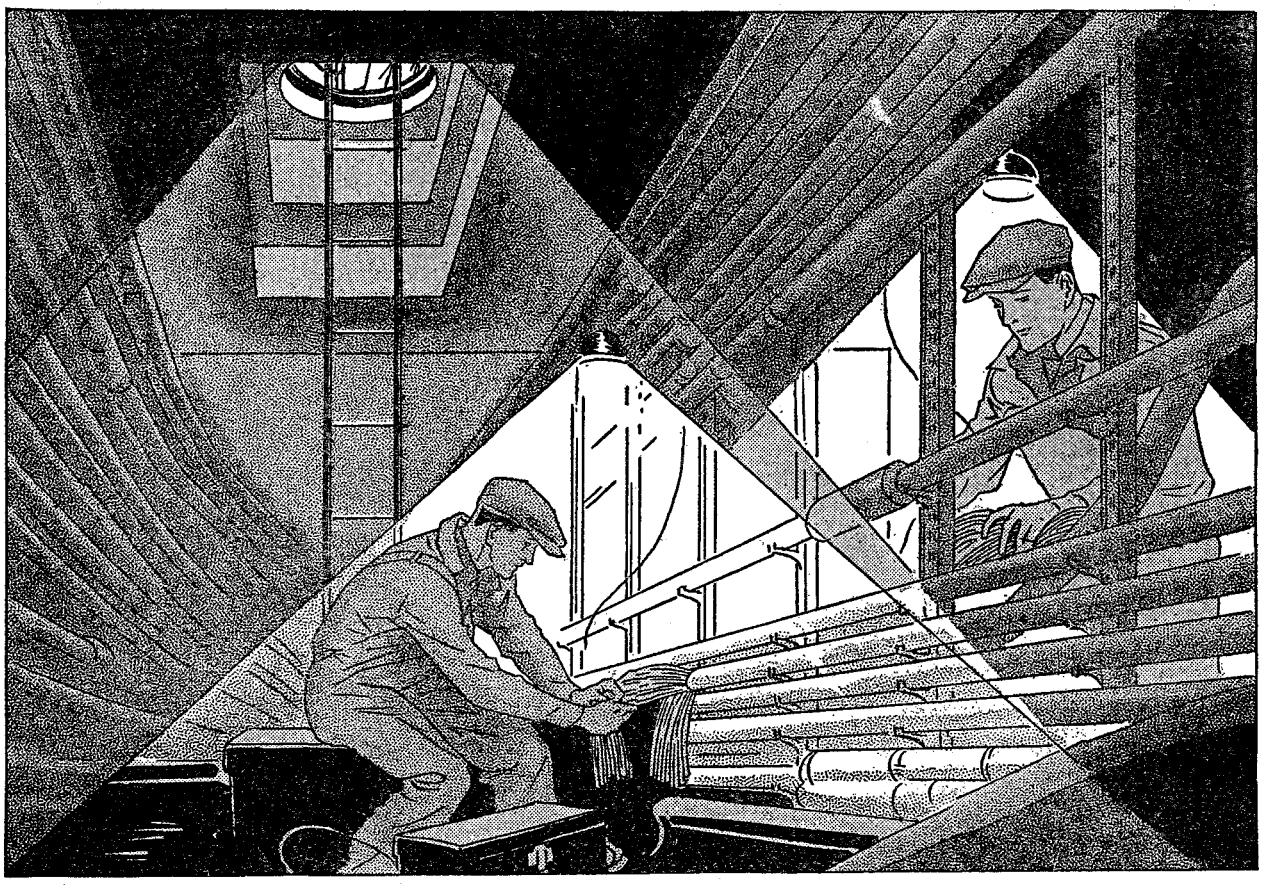

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